



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

No. 100.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 28, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' BIG RISK; OR, READY TO TAKE CHANCES.

By HARRY MOORE



It was a big risk, but the Liberty Boys were used to taking chances, and one after another they leaped from the roof of the burning building to the roof of the building across the way.







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## CHAPTER I.

### TRAPPED.

Just before lamp-lighting time one beautiful evening in the third week in September of the year 1776 a seeming country youth was walking slowly down Broadway in the great city of New York.

This youth was perhaps eighteen years old, and was roughly dressed, after the fashion of farmers' boys of that period. A keen observer, however, to have looked under the rim of the old slouch hat into the keen eyes that twinkled here, and upon the firm, handsome face would have been impressed with the fact that this youth was something more than a mere farmer, getting

And he would have been right, for this youth was no other than the famous scout, spy, and captain of "The Liberty Boys of '76," Dick Slater.

At this time the patriot army occupied Harlem Heights, having evacuated the city a short time before, and the British army had come over from Brooklyn Heights and taken possession of the vacated city.

General Washington had sent Dick down into the city on a spying expedition, and the youth was now waiting to be accosted by a friend of the great cause of Liberty, who lived in the city, and who was supposed to have knowledge of the intentions of the British.

Suddenly a man passed Dick, walking quite rapidly, and as he passed he uttered the words:

"Liberty or death."

Without a word Dick quickened his pace and followed the man.

The words, "Liberty or death," was a signal that had been agreed upon by the commander-in-chief and the patriot citizen in question; and the way the citizen knew Dick was a messenger from General Washington was by a bit of blue ribbon which he wore in a button-hole.

The man never looked behind him, but continued onward at a good pace. He kept on down Broadway a couple of blocks, and then turned aside into a cross street.

Here it was not so crowded, and Dick was soon alongside the man.

"You are from the Heights?" the man asked.

"I am," replied Dick.

"Good."

He said no more, and neither did Dick. He looked his companion over carefully, however, and saw a man of perhaps forty-five years, well-dressed, and fairly good-looking. In the encompassing dusk, however, it was hard to see the man's face with any distinctness.

They turned a number of corners and wound around among the crooked streets, and it almost seemed to Dick, who was a very observant youth, as if the man was trying to confuse him, and make it impossible for him to remember the route they had come.

"I don't see why he should wish to do that, though," the youth said to himself, "unless, indeed, he thinks it possible I may not be a patriot, and am an enemy, trying to find out where he lives."

The youth was not inclined to find fault with the patriot for being careful.

"In these troublous times it is quite necessary to be careful," he said to himself.

Presently the man turned up an alley, after traversing half its length, paused, and opened a gate which led into the back yard of a tall building.

He passed through the gateway; Dick followed, and then, closing the gate, the man led the way to the back door, and producing a key, unlocked and opened the door.

"Come," he said, and he entered the house.

The youth followed, and the man closed and locked the door.

They were in complete darkness, but the man took hold of Dick's arm and guided him along the hallway.

Presently the man stopped, and threw open a door.

It opened into a library, and on the table in the center of the room were a couple of lighted candles.

"Enter," said Dick's companion.

The youth obeyed, and then the man followed, closing the door behind him.

He motioned toward the table, beside which were half a dozen chairs.

"Be seated," he invited.

The youth took a seat, and removing his hat, looked around him with one sweeping, comprehensive glance, after which he turned his eyes on the face of his host.

The man had seated himself on the opposite side of the table, and had removed his hat.

Now that Dick was enabled to get a good look at the



man, he was not very favorably impressed. There was something about the man's looks that he did not like.

To the "Liberty Boy's" notion the patriot had a sinister look in general.

"He may be all right, however," thought the youth. "He gave the signal, and he must be Gerald Carlton, the patriot friend of General Washington."

The youth made up his mind that he would be very careful, however.

"I am not going to give him any information, if I can help it," he told himself. "I have come here to secure information."

"Well," said the man, after a few moments of hesitation, "it seems like the commander-in-chief has chosen rather a young chap for a messenger."

"Yes, but youth is no crime, sir," was the calm reply.

The man frowned slightly.

"Oh, of course not, but I would have thought that the commander-in-chief would have selected an older person. He certainly has plenty of men in his army."

"Oh, yes; he has plenty of men. But what information have you for me, sir? The fact that the commander-in-chief has sent me should be proof that he considers me trustworthy."

The man hesitated, and Dick, who was watching the fellow closely, more than half believed he was trying to play a part.

"I don't like to impart important information to a mere boy, as it were," he said, finally. "But if you can make me satisfied that it is all right and safe, I will do so, of course."

"I shall be pleased to do my best to satisfy you, sir, if you consider it necessary."

"I do. First, then, what is your name?"

"Dick Slater."

The man started, and looked at the youth with interest.

"So you are Dick Slater, the noted scout and spy?" he remarked slowly.

"I am Dick Slater, certainly."

"Well, well. I am glad to hear it."

The man seemed to be sincere, but there was a peculiar intonation to his voice which Dick noticed, and could not understand.

"Now will you kindly tell me the news, sir?" said Dick.

"Certainly," was the prompt reply. "I shall be pleased to do so. The very latest news, Dick Slater, is that—you are a prisoner."

As he spoke the last four words there was a clicking sound, and the "Liberty Boy" suddenly felt himself seized seemingly by several pair of strong hands.

And such was indeed the case, but the hands were made of steel, and had shot from the back and sides of the large arm chair in which the youth was sitting.

There were three pair of the hands, and they held the youth firmly, in spite of his struggles. The chair was a trap, and the mechanism was set in motion by moving a

small lever which was under the top of the where the man sat.

"There is no use of struggling, my dear Mr. Slater," said the man, with a smile of sardonic triumph. "You cannot free yourself in a year."

"What does this mean?" asked Dick, his eyes flashing.

"It means that you are a prisoner, my brave young friend. I should think you could see that much."

"But why am I a prisoner? Why have you done this? What does it mean?"

"What does it mean?" The man spoke deliberately, and smiled coldly.

"Yes."

"Why, it means that you have been trapped."

"Trapped?"

"Yes."

"Then you are not a patriot?"

The man shook his head.

"Oh, no; I am far from being a patriot."

"You are a Tory, perhaps?"

"I am."

"How did you know what to say to me on the street?" asked Dick. This was indeed a mystery to him. If the man was a Tory how had he known the words to be spoken, and how had he known who to speak them to?

The man laughed.

"You would like to know the magic toy boys and devices in a tantalizingly illustrated pose?" he remarked.

"Yes."

"Well, I am sorry to say that I cannot gratify your curiosity."

"You mean that you will not, of course."

"Yes, if you like it in that way."

"Very well. Of course I cannot make you tell."

"I rather think not. You see, that is a secret, and I would not give it away for anything." The truth was that a British spy had penetrated into the patriot camp, and had succeeded in learning the signal-words.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Dick.

The man did not reply at once. He calmly drew a card from his pocket, took out a cigar, lighted it, and then gazed at Dick through the smokeclouds of his own creating.

"You ask what I am going to do with you?" he remarked, after a little.

"Yes."

Again the man was silent for a few moments, and then he said:

"I believe there is a reward offered for you, is that not?"

"I'm sure I do not know," was the reply.

"Well, I am certain there is. I believe that General Howe has offered the munificent sum of five hundred pounds for your capture."

"Well, if that is the case, I judge that you are pretty sure of being made five hundred pounds richer at an early date," said Dick calmly.

"I am not so sure of that," the man replied.



The youth said nothing, but looked an inquiry, and the man went on:

"I may not deliver you up to General Howe."

"No?" remarked Dick. He could not think what the man meant.

"No. I think that I know something that will beat that hollow."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; I suppose you have no desire to die?"

"You are right about that."

"So I supposed; few persons wish to give up their hold on life."

"That is so."

The man was silent for a few moments, and then said:

"This war has practically but just begun, my boy."

"It would seem so."

"It is so. I am sure of it. And in war times there are great opportunities for shrewd men to grow rich, Dick Slater."

"I suppose that is true, too—especially if the shrewd men are unscrupulous and do not care what means they make use of in accumulating their wealth."

"That is it, exactly. Well, my boy, you see before you the leader of a number of men who have banded together for the purpose of getting rich during the continuance of this war."

"Indeed?" Dick eyed the man with interest. He was beginning to know what sort of a fellow this Tory was.

"Yes. I have a band of men, and we are going to get rich. The members of this band are all brave and dangerous men, men who will fight to the death, if need be, and as you have seen some of your work, and have heard a great deal more about you, I have made up my mind to make you an offer."

The "Liberty Boy" started. He believed he understood what the man meant now.

"You have decided to make me an offer?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What kind of an offer?"

"An offer to join my band."

"An offer to join your band?"

"Yes; I have ten men; I want just one more. Then there will be a dozen of us, and you are just the kind of a man I need, I make this offer: that if you will join my band you shall be received as one of us at once, and will share equally with each of the ten men. What do you say?"

The man was eyeing Dick eagerly now. It was plain that he was anxious to have the youth join his band.

He was destined to be disappointed, however, for Dick shook his head, and said, in a most decided voice:

"I decline your offer."

"You do?" in surprise, not unmixed with disappointment.

"I do!"

"But think, Dick Slater, what it means to refuse. If

you do not join us I shall hand you over to General Howe, and that means that you will be shot or hanged."

"I can't help it," was the firm reply. "I would rather die than become a member of a band of cowardly robbers."

## CHAPTER II.

### A FRIEND.

An exclamation of anger escaped the lips of the man.

"You are a fool," he said sneeringly.

"No, I am simply an honest man."

"It's the same thing."

"I don't think so."

"You do not?"

"No; to my way of thinking the truth of the matter is just the opposite of that. I think a man is a fool who is not honest."

"Bah! You're a regular Sundayschool boy!"

"I believe in doing right toward my fellowmen, and I think that a thief is a most contemptible piece of humanity."

"Then you won't join us?"

"No."

"Think well, young man!"

"It requires no thought at all, sir."

"Your decision is final?"

"Absolutely."

"Very well, then; good-night."

With the words the man pulled another lever concealed under the top of the table, and the chair on which Dick was sitting began sinking slowly through the floor. The part of the floor on which the chair sat was a platform about three feet square.

As this platform and the chair disappeared from sight, a trapdoor, which hinged in place, came up and closed the hole, so that all looked natural and as it should.

The "Liberty Boy," helpless so far as being able to move or use his hands, could yet use his eyes, and he saw all.

"This is ahead of anything I have ever seen, so far," he thought. "I wonder where it will end?"

As the trapdoor closed the place where Dick was was left in darkness. And then the chair came to a stop suddenly, but without a very great jar, as it had moved slowly.

"Now, I wonder what kind of a place I am in?" the youth asked himself.

He judged that he must be in the cellar.

And then the thought came to him: why had he been lowered into the cellar, fastened in the chair? What did the man intend doing?

"He said he was going to hand me over to General Howe," the youth soliloquized, "and I suppose that is what he will do. He probably intends leaving me here till the redcoats come and get me."



Just then the trapdoor was opened, and the face of the man appeared.

He looked down upon Dick with a fiendish grin on his face.

"Well, how do you like it down there?" he asked maliciously.

"I can't say that I like it very well," was the calm reply.

"I suppose not."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"Leave you there till I can send word to General Howe that I have captured the great rebel spy, Dick Slater."

"So that is what you are going to do?"

"Yes. Have you any objections to offer?"

"It would do no good if I had, I judge."

"Ha, ha, ha! You are right about that."

"So I supposed."

"Yes; but now I am going to give you one more chance. Will you join my band?"

"No! I have already told you that several times, and I am not one who changes his mind so quickly."

"Very well. I am not so very particular. I will make a good bit out of handing you over to General Howe, so I am very well satisfied."

"I will settle with you one of these days, my friend," said Dick, grimly. "I owe you something, and I make it a rule to pay my debts."

"Oh, that is all right, Mr. Slater," with a mocking laugh. "You are quite welcome to pay me off if you get the chance."

"You may be sure I will do it, too."

"If you get the chance," laughing again.

"I may get the chance sooner than you think."

"Bosh! I shall hand you over to the redcoats, and they will put an end to you very quickly. They make short work of rebel spies."

"They have tried to make short work of me once or twice, already, and have failed. They may do so again."

"I don't think there is any danger."

Then the man slammed the trapdoor shut, leaving Dick in darkness.

The youth had improved the opportunity to look about him, and had seen that he was in a cellar of goodly dimensions. It was perhaps fifty feet wide, and one hundred long.

There were a couple of windows at the rear, but there were strong bars across them; so that, had Dick been free, he would have had hard work getting out.

As it was he was of course a helpless prisoner, the steel arms of the chair holding him tightly.

"I wish I could find the lever or whatever it is that operates the mechanism of this chair," thought Dick.

He moved his hands as much as he could, but that was not a great deal, and he felt all around, but could find nothing that seemed to be what he was looking for. At any rate, he was unable to touch anything that had any effect on the mechanism of the chair.

"I guess that I am doomed to fall into the hands of the

British this time," the youth thought. "Well, it can't be helped. Perhaps I may be enabled to make my escape from their hands."

He was sitting there, thinking, when of a sudden he fancied he heard a peculiar, scraping sound.

He listened intently.

"I wonder what that can have been?" he asked himself.

Then the thought struck him that it might have been rats gnawing at a board, or something.

"I guess that's what it is—rats," he decided.

Then a cry of amazement escaped his lips.

Good reason, too, that he should be amazed, for a section of the wall of the cellar swung open, almost opposite where he sat, revealing a beautiful girl of perhaps seventeen years who, standing in the opening, and in the light made by candle sitting on a table a little ways back of her, presented a beautiful sight.

To Dick's eager and astonished gaze she looked like an angel, indeed.

"Sh!" said the girl in a low voice. "Make no noise. You might be heard."

"Who are you?" asked Dick, cautiously.

"I am your friend."

"I am glad to know that; I certainly need a friend just about now."

"You do, indeed."

The girl was advancing as she said this, and the nearer she got, the more Dick was impressed with the beauty and sweetness of the girl.

"Do you know how to free me from this terrible chair?" asked Dick.

"I don't know, of a certainty, sir. But I think that I can find out how it is operated."

"I hope you may be able to do so."

The girl began trying to find the lever, or whatever it might be that controlled the action of the steel arms, but she was unsuccessful; and presently she hastened through the opening into the other cellar, and brought the candle. Then she began making a very careful examination.

"Can't you find it?" asked Dick presently.

"No, sir; it seems to be so securely hidden as to defy my efforts."

"Jove, that is bad. Can it be that I am to be so near making my escape, only to be foiled, after all?"

"I will find it sooner or later," said the girl determinedly.

"Yes, if you are given time enough," said Dick. "The man is likely to be back here before very long."

"Where did he go?"

"To inform the British that he had a prisoner for them," said the girl.

The girl worked rapidly and eagerly. She pushed at different parts of the chair; then she pulled at them. She pressed against almost every square inch of surface, in the hope of finding a button that would operate the mechanism and move the steel arms, but to no avail.

"I guess I'm doomed to stay here till the owner of the



air is pleased to liberate me," said the youth in a disappointed voice.

"I hope not, sir," said the girl. "I'll keep on trying, at any rate, and perhaps I may find what I am looking for presently."

But Dick was afraid she would not.

"I begin to think the mechanism is operated from the room above," he said; "and in that case of course you will find nothing about the chair itself that will enable you to free me."

"You are right," replied the girl, "but I hope that there is some way of freeing you from those terrible steel arms."

"I hope you will find something that will make them move, but I fear you will not."

Suddenly the two heard a door open and shut. The noise came from the front of the house, and was followed immediately by the trampling of feet above the heads of the

"The redcoats are coming," said Dick in a low, excited voice. "You cannot free me, miss. You had better go away and leave me at once, or you will get yourself into trouble."

"I will not desert you until forced to do so," the girl said bravely. "Perhaps I may yet find the secret lever or whatever it is that controls the mechanism. I'll keep on trying," and she felt eagerly and swiftly around again.

Suddenly a door was heard open, and a streak of light fell down into the cellar, over at the farther side, revealing a flight of steps.

"The noted rebel spy, Dick Slater, is a prisoner down in my cellar, gentlemen," said a voice which Dick recognized as being that of the man who had tricked and captured him. "Follow me, and you will quickly have him in your hands."

"Go!" whispered Dick in the girl's ear. "Go at once, and save yourself."

### CHAPTER III.

#### A DISAPPOINTED MAN.

At this instant there was a gasping, smothered cry of delight from the girl's lips, a clicking sound, and the steel arms which had held Dick a prisoner for so long shot back.

The girl had found the secret spring that controlled them, and the youth was free.

"Quick! follow me!" the girl whispered, and she darted through the opening, into the adjoining cellar, followed by Dick.

But had it been closed in time to prevent the redcoats from discovering the manner in which Dick had escaped?

This was a question which the two were eager to have answered, and they placed their ears against the wall and listened intently.

They could hear the voices of the redcoats, but could

not distinguish what was said. There was a murmuring sound, and that was all.

We will see what was being done and said on the other side of the wall.

The man who had captured Dick had done as he had threatened; he had gone to British headquarters, and had reported that he had captured the great rebel spy, Dick Slater. He had claimed the reward, and General Howe had told him that he would send a party of soldiers to get the prisoner; and if he turned out to be the real Dick Slater the reward would be paid.

In company with half a dozen redcoats the man returned to the house, had entered, and led the way down into the cellar, where he confidently expected to find the rebel spy, a prisoner in the chair.

When he saw the chair empty a cry of anger and dismay escaped his lips.

"Gone!" he cried hollowly. "Gone! But how? I cannot understand it! I would have wagered my life that he could not escape."

The redcoats stared first at the chair and then at their guide.

"He is gone, you say?" asked one.

"Yes, gone!" Despair was in the man's tone.

"Where was he? Down here in the cellar?"

"Yes, in that chair."

"In the chair?"

"Yes."

"Was he tied?"

"Better than that."

"What do you mean?"

"Sit down in the chair, and I will show you."

The redcoat did so.

Then the man touched the secret spring, and the steel arms shot out and grasped the redcoat, holding him tight and fast, and causing him to utter an exclamation of amazement, and almost terror.

"Great Guns! what is this?" he cried, struggling to free himself, but failing.

"That is just the manner in which I had the rebel spy when I left the house to go to your headquarters half an hour ago."

"Then how did he manage to escape?"

"That is a mystery."

"Perhaps he found the spring that operates the mechanism, and freed himself."

"Impossible."

"Why so?"

"The spring cannot be reached by one sitting in the chair."

"Is that so?"

"It is. He has been set free by some one; he could not have escaped unaided."

"Well, free me; I don't like the feel of these iron claws."

The man touched the spring, and the arms shot back out of sight within the frame of the chair.



The redcoats examined the chair with considerable curiosity.

"That rather beats anything I have ever run across," said one.

"You are right," from another. "It is a pretty good trick."

"But it failed to hold the victim this time," said another.

"It was not the fault of the chair, though," its owner said. "Some one freed the prisoner, else he would be here yet."

"I wonder where they have gone?" remarked one, looking around him searchingly.

"We will search the cellar," said the man. "It is barely possible that they are concealed somewhere."

A thorough search was made, but of course, without result.

The prisoner had escaped from the cellar as well as from the chair.

The man who had brought the redcoats to the spot, and who had confidently counted on pocketing five hundred pounds of British money, was greatly disappointed, and vented it in oaths, not loud, but deep.

"That is just my luck," he growled. "I should have tied the scoundrel's arms, and taken him to your headquarters myself. Then I would have been sure of it."

"Yes, that would have been the best thing to do," agreed the leader of the redcoats.

As there was nothing further to detain them in the cellar, the party went back up to the first floor, and after the redcoats had taken a few drinks of wine, tendered by the host, they took their departure, feeling in better spirits than they otherwise would have felt.

Scarcely had the redcoats taken their departure before a man put in an appearance, coming from the rear of the house.

Soon another came, and another, and this was continued till ten men had appeared, and sat around the table in the room where Dick had had his interview with the man.

"Well, chief, what's the matter?" asked one of the newcomers. "You look blue."

"I feel blue," was the growling reply.

"What has happened?"

The man told his companions—who were the members of the band he had mentioned to Dick—and they gave utterance to exclamations of astonishment and sympathy when he had finished his story.

"You say you had Dick Slater, the rebel spy, a prisoner, and he escaped?"

"He slipped through your fingers?"

"That was too bad."

"It was rather hard on you to almost have your fingers on five hundred pounds of good British money, and then fail to get it."

Such were a few of the remarks made by the men.

"You are right," said the man who had been addressed

as chief. "I thought I had the money, but I was mistaken."

"But how did the fellow manage to escape?" asked one.

"He must have had help," said another.

"So he must," replied the chief. "But who helped him?"

The men shook their heads. This was a question they could not answer.

"I don't like the affair, at all," the chief went on. "To free the spy, the person, whoever it was, must have entered our cellar, and that is something I thought an impossibility. Now, if the person has entered once he can enter again, and may have entered before, and who knows but what some one has been spying on us."

The men looked at one another with a disturbed look on their faces.

"Well, this fellow, Dick Slater, knows about our band," said one, presently, "so we will do well to hunt new quarters, don't you think?"

"We will at least hunt out new quarters, to retire to in case he does try to bother us here," replied the chief. "We may not do so."

"What makes you think that?"

"He has work to do for the commander-in-chief of the rebel army, and will in all likelihood not have time to bother with us. At least, that is what I think."

"Perhaps so. I hope so," said one.

The leader of the gang rose and went to a closet at the side of the room, and brought forth bottles and glasses.

"We will have some consolation for the loss of the valuable prisoner," the man said, and soon they were drinking copious draughts of the wine.

They were soon feeling much better, and presently began talking and laughing at a great rate.

Suddenly there came a loud rapping at the outer door, and the men stopped laughing and talking and looked at one another in rather a frightened manner.

"Who can it be?" asked one.

"I don't know," from another.

"Can it be that our plans are known, and that we are to be seized and made prisoners?" asked one.

"I don't think so," said the leader. "We haven't done anything yet, and there is nothing that they could arrange for us."

"That's so," from another.

"I'll go and see who it is," said the chief, and he went and left the room.

Advancing to the front door, he called out:

"Who is there?"

"Open the door," was the reply, in an imperious voice.

The man hesitated, and then, mustering up courage, unlocked and opened the door.

Half a dozen redcoats stood on the stoop.

"Is your name Gerald Carlton?" asked the leader of the party.

A relieved look appeared on the chief's face.



"No," he replied. "You have made a mistake. Gerald Carlton does not live here."

"He does not?"

"No."

"Do you know where he does live?"

"Yes; he lives next door," making a gesture to indicate which side the house in question was on.

"Ah, that's it, eh? Much obliged. Sorry we disturbed you."

"That's all right."

The soldiers went down the steps, walked to the adjoining house, ascended to the stoop, and rang the bell, while the man in the other house returned to the room where his companions were awaiting him, a smile of satisfaction on his face.

"What is it, chief?" asked one.

"The redcoats are after Gerald Carlton, the rebel next door," was the reply.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IN HIDING.

As soon as it was found that they could not understand what was being said by the redcoats and their leader, on the other side of the wall, the girl turned to Dick, and whispered:

"Come, there is no use of staying here longer."

She led the way up out of the cellar, and passing through what was evidently a kitchen, they made their way along a hall. About midway of the hall, the girl paused, and opening a door, motioned for Dick to enter the room.

He did so, and she followed, and placed the candle on a table near the center of the room.

The youth saw he was in a library.

"Be seated," invited the girl, and Dick took a seat.

"Will you not please tell me your name, miss?" Dick asked. "I wish to know to whom I am indebted for saving me from the redcoats, who would undoubtedly have shot or hanged me."

"My name is Minnie Carlton, Mr. Slater," was the reply.

"Minnie Carlton?" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes."

"I came to New York to see a man named Gerald Carlton. Is he—can he be—"

"He is my father, Mr. Slater."

"Well, well. I am indeed glad to hear that! But how did you learn my name?"

"I overheard part of your conversation with Henry Lewis, and heard you tell him your name."

"How came you to open the secret door in the wall, Miss Minnie?"

"I was in our cellar, Mr. Slater, and as I discovered the secret door months ago, and have often entered the other cellar, I decided to do so again. I started to open it—in

deed, got it open a little ways, and hearing you and Henry Lewis talking, I listened, and, as I have said, heard him call you Dick Slater. Knowing you to be a patriot, I made up my mind to save you, and put in an appearance as soon as Lewis went away."

"Henry Lewis is the name of the man who made a prisoner of me?"

"Yes."

"Well, I consider that I owe you my life, Miss Minnie," said Dick, earnestly. "I thank you earnestly and sincerely, and you may rest assured that if ever I get the chance I shall try to pay you back for what you have done for me."

"You owe me nothing, sir; I am a patriot girl, and knowing you were a patriot, I felt that it was my duty to save you, if possible to do so."

"I thank you just the same; and now, miss, your father—is he at home?"

"He is; I will send him here at once."

"Thank you."

The youth had not long to wait; the girl hastened from the room, and it seemed as if she had scarcely had time to more than get across the hall before the door again opened and into the room stepped a tall, handsome man of middle age.

The "Liberty Boy" rose and looked inquiringly at the newcomer.

"Mr. Carlton?" he asked.

"At your service, sir. And you are Dick Slater?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am pleased to know you, my boy!" and with those words, the man grasped the youth's hand and shook heartily.

"And I am more than glad to know you, sir," said Dick. "I suppose your daughter has told you of the fact that I was imposed upon by your scoundrelly neighbor next door?"

"No, she told me nothing, save that Dick Slater was in the library. You say you were imposed upon by my next-door neighbor, Henry Lewis?"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"He met me up on Broadway, spoke the signal words, and I followed him to his home."

"Indeed? How in the world did he know the signal words, and who to speak them to?"

"That is more than I can say, sir."

Mr. Carlton knitted his brows, and there was a frown on his face.

"I don't fancy this at all," he said presently. "There is no knowing how much the fellow may know. There is more than a probability that he knows I am a patriot, and if that is so, he may try to hand me over to the British. He would like to get me out of the way, I know, for he has been trying to pay court to my daughter, and the fact that he will have nothing to do with him has angered him."

"Ah! If that is the case you will need to be on the alert," said Dick.



"So I think. But go on with your story. What did you do, when you entered his house with him?"

"He made a prisoner of me."

"Made a prisoner of you!"

"Yes," and then Dick told the whole story, being interrupted occasionally by exclamations from his auditor.

"The infamous scoundrel," Mr. Carlton exclaimed, when Dick had finished. "So he is the chief of a band that has been gotten together for the purpose of robbing and pilaging during the continuance of the war, is he? Well, that is just about what I should expect from him."

"Well, thanks to your daughter he failed in his plan to send me over to the British," said Dick.

"So he did; Minnie is a brave girl."

"So she is, sir; brave and noble-hearted."

"She discovered the secret way of reaching the cellar of the neighboring house months ago, but I never supposed it would be of any particular use."

"Well, the knowledge was of great benefit to me, sir."

"Yes, indeed; and now to business. You came here from the commander-in-chief?"

"Straight as I could come, sir."

"Good! I have secured some information which may be of value to him. I have written it down on paper, and you may take it to him."

The patriot handed Dick a letter, which the youth placed in his pocket.

"I suppose you will try to return to Harlem Heights at once, my boy?" the man asked.

"Yes, as quickly as possible."

"Good! The quicker the commander-in-chief has the information contained in the letter you have, the better it will be, I am sure."

"Very good. I will start at once."

At this moment there came a ring at the doorbell.

"I wonder who that can be?" exclaimed Mr. Carlton.

The next moment Minnie entered, an excited look on her face.

"There is a party of redcoats at the door, father!" she exclaimed.

"A party of redcoats?"

"Yes; I was watching out of the front window, and saw them go to the house next door. They had a talk with some one there, and then came here."

"I wonder what they want here?" Mr. Carlton exclaimed, with an anxious look on his face.

"I fear they have come to make a prisoner of you, father," said the girl.

"It is more than likely," said Dick.

"Jove, what shall I do?"

"Why can we not all three slip out by the rear entrance, and get away?" said Dick.

"Likely that is guarded also," said Mr. Carlton.

"Then what shall we do?"

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Minnie.

"What?" asked her father.

"I will send our servant girl to the door, and tell her to say to the redcoats that there is no one at home."

"But they will enter and search for me, likely, Minnie," said her father.

"Let them. They won't find us."

"They can hardly fail to do so; there is no place where we can hide."

"Yes; there is one absolutely secure place."

"Where?"

"In our neighbor's cellar."

Dick and the girl's father stared at Minnie in amazement, and then Mr. Carlton exclaimed

"I believe you are right, Minnie. They could never find us there."

"Never, father."

"But Henry Lewis may discover our presence in his cellar."

"I don't think there is much danger of that."

"Well, we will risk it, eh, Mr. Slater?"

"I think it a splendid scheme, sir."

"Then hasten, Minnie; those fellows are growing impatient; hear them pounding on the door?"

"I'll hurry, father."

The girl hastened away, but was back again in a minute or two, and motioned for the two to follow her.

"Sarah will go to the door right away," she explained, "and we must be out of the way before the redcoats enter."

The girl led the way along the hall, into the kitchen, and down into the cellar. She carried a candle, so that the two could see to make their way along.

She approached the place where the secret movable section was, and touching a certain point of the wall, gave a push.

The section swung back, and the girl peered through into the adjoining cellar.

All was quiet there. The redcoats had long since gone.

The three passed through, but did not at once close the door.

"Just leave it open till they get ready to come down in your father's cellar to look for him, Miss Minnie," said Dick. "Perhaps they may not do so at all; and if it is open and we should hear anyone coming down into the cellar where we now are we would be able to get out before being seen."

This was considered to be good advice, and so the section was not closed.

Presently the trampling of feet was heard on the floor of Mr. Carlton's house, and the three looked at one another significantly.

"They have entered," whispered Minnie.

"Yes; they are going to search the house, likely," said Dick.

The trampling of feet was heard for a long while, and it was evident that the redcoats were looking in all the rooms on the ground floor. Then the footsteps grew fainter, and it was surmised that the searchers had gone upstairs.

Nearly half an hour passed, and then the trampling



grew louder and plainer. The redcoats had come back downstairs.

"Now, we must be ready to close this door in a hurry," said Minnie. "I think they will come down in the cellar, next."

"Quite likely," agreed Dick.

This proved to be correct. The trampling of feet was heard in the kitchen, and then the cellar-door was heard to come open.

"They are coming," whispered Minnie. "Step back into the other cellar and I will close this door."

Mr. Carlton and Dick obeyed, and the girl closed the door, making the wall look as if smooth and solid.

They could hear the redcoats moving around in the adjoining cellar, but could not distinguish what was being said.

"I wish they would hurry and go back upstairs," the girl whispered nervously. "Lewis might take it into his head to come down in his cellar for something, and would discover us."

As she finished speaking they heard footsteps approaching the door leading to the cellar they were in, and then Dick blew the light out, leaving them in darkness.

As he did so the cellar-door opened, and a streak of light shone down the steps, and a human voice called out, speaking to someone on the same floor, evidently:

"I'll be back in a few moments, with some fresh bottles of wine."

"We will be discovered!" whispered Minnie, in a trembling voice.

## CHAPTER V.

### LEWIS IS SURPRISED.

"Come," whispered Dick, and he pulled his two companions gently across the floor, until they were underneath the steps. Here it would be impossible for the newcomer to see them until after he had descended into the cellar, and half-turned.

The "Liberty Boy" quickly doffed his coat, and holding it in readiness, waited for the coming of Lewis, for he was sure he had recognized the voice as belonging to the man who had trapped him earlier in the evening.

"I would like to get even with him," thought Dick. "And I think that here is my chance."

The newcomer took his time in coming down the steps. Evidently he was in no hurry.

At last he stepped on to the floor of the cellar, however, and then, with a tiger-like spring, Dick was upon him.

The youth threw the coat over the man's head, and did it so quickly that the fellow did not get so much as a glimpse of his assailant.

Lewis struggled, and tried to cry out, but the enfolding coat smothered his cries to such an extent as to make it

impossible for his comrades to hear him, and his struggles were ineffective.

The "Liberty Boy" was too strong for him, and had no difficulty in holding him.

The candle was dropped at the beginning of the struggle but it did not go out, and Minnie leaped forward and caught it up; so they were not left in darkness.

Presently the man's struggles grew fainter; he was being smothered.

The youth turned his face toward Mr. Carlton.

"Go and listen, and see if the redcoats have left the other cellar," he said in a cautious voice.

Mr. Carlton obeyed.

Presently Lewis ceased struggling altogether, and Dick felt confident he had lapsed into unconsciousness.

At this instant they heard footsteps above their heads and a voice called out:

"Lewis, where are you? What's the matter? Why don't you come ahead with that wine?"

A little gasp of terror escaped the lips of Minnie. She thought they were to be discovered after all.

"Have they gone?" Dick asked of Mr. Carlton.

The man nodded his head in assent.

"Then open the door, Miss Minnie, and we will get back into the other cellar," said Dick in a cautious undertone. As he spoke he took the candle out of the girl's hand, and placed it on the floor beside the unconscious form of Lewis.

Minnie hastened to open the swinging section, and the three passed through the opening, and swung the section gently shut, just as the man was starting to come down into the cellar.

Of course the three were in darkness, and not being able to see, they were forced to depend on their hearing.

They stood still and listened.

They could hear nothing, and so made their way toward the stairs leading up into the kitchen.

Reaching the stairs, they made their way up, entered the kitchen, and there paused and listened again.

All was quiet, and feeling sure that the redcoats had gone, they ventured out into the hall, and made their way back to the library.

Here Minnie left the two men, and went in search of the servant girl.

Minnie returned to the library in a few minutes, with the information that the redcoats had gone.

"And I will go in a few minutes," said Dick. "I'll wait long enough for the coast to become clear."

Meantime quite a surprised lot of men were in the adjoining house.

The man who had come down into the cellar just as Dick, Mr. Carlton, and Minnie were leaving it discovered the unconscious form of his leader, Lewis, the instant he reached the foot of the stairs, and a cry of amazement and consternation escaped his lips.

"Good heavens! Is he dead?" he exclaimed, and leaping forward he knelt beside the man's form, and placed his hand over the heart.



At first he could not distinguish any movement, but presently he noted a faint beating, and an exclamation of relief escaped his lips:

"Thank heaven, he is not dead!"

Then he leaped up, ran to the top of the steps, and called to his comrades.

They came in a hurry, for they knew from the tone of their comrade's voice that something unusual had occurred.

"Bring some water," he called, as they appeared in the kitchen. "There's something the matter with the chief."

One brought some water, and soon all were in the cellar. They chafed the unconscious man's wrists and bathed his temples with cold water, and presently Lewis recovered his senses.

He did not seem to know where he was at first, and stared at the faces of his companions in amazement.

"Where am I?" he asked. "What is the matter?"

"You are in the cellar," was the reply. "Don't you remember? You went down into the cellar to get some more wine. What in the name of all that is wonderful happened to you, anyway?"

Lewis rose to a sitting posture, a look of understanding on his face.

"I remember now," he said. "I came down into the cellar, and just as I got here someone threw a blanket or a coat over something of that kind over my head, and in spite of all I could do he held me, and smothered me till I became unconscious."

"Great Guns!"

"You don't say so, chief!"

"Someone seized you?"

"Who could it have been?"

"And where is he now?"

The men looked around them wonderingly and suspiciously, but nowhere could they see any sign of anyone.

Lewis rose to his feet. He was a bit unsteady, but said he would be all right shortly.

"Search the cellar thoroughly, men," he said. "Maybe the scoundrel who seized me is here somewhere."

The men did as told, but of course found no one.

Lewis was disappointed.

"I would give something to lay hands on the fellow who played me that trick," he growled.

"Well, as he isn't in the cellar he must be somewhere in the house, don't you think?" remarked one. "He could not have got out of the cellar in any other way, could he?"

"No; and if we hurry we may be able to nab him yet," cried Lewis eagerly. "Come, everybody."

They hastened back upstairs, but although they searched all the rooms on every floor, they did not find anyone.

They returned to the library, and talked the matter over wonderingly.

They could not think who it was that had handled their chief so roughly.

"How did he get in the house?" asked one.

"And where did he go so quickly and silently?" from "What?" asked.

"That is the question," replied one.

And it was a question which they could not answer. It was one, too, that troubled them not a little. They did not like to think that some person unknown could enter and leave the building at will.

Finally they stopped talking of that, and turned their attention to something else.

"I wonder if the redcoats captured Carlton and took him to prison?" remarked one.

"Quite likely," said another.

"I believe I'll find out," said Lewis. "I hope that suit is the case, for then I shall be enabled to push my suit with the girl. But for the old man, who always stood between me and the girl, I think I should have been able to make a good impression on her."

The leader of the band rose as he spoke.

"Wait here for me, men," he said. "I won't be gone long."

He left the room and the house, and was gone perhaps ten minutes. Then he returned, looking angry and disgusted.

"What's the matter?" was asked, for the men saw the leader was not pleased.

"Matter enough," was the growling reply. "Carlton is at home, big as life, and more impudent than ever."

"You don't say!"

"How does that happen?"

"And the redcoats didn't take him?"

"Why didn't they?"

"I don't know," replied Lewis, in a disgusted voice. "He thanked me for sending the redcoats over there, and said that he was glad, as it gave him the opportunity to prove that he was a loyal king's man, as he had done to the complete satisfaction of the British soldiers."

"Well, that beats me," said one, "for we all know he's a rebel."

"Yes, but he fooled the British soldiers in some way."

"I don't see how he did it."

"Nor I. But he is a smooth-tongued fellow, and pulled the wool over their eyes. He told me, further, that he didn't want me to come to his house any more—that he had no use for me."

"He is plainspoken, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose you will obey him?"

"Oh, yes," with a sarcastic intonation. "I'll obey his order. I won't go when he is at home, but one of these fine evenings I will call when he is out, and when he comes back his pretty daughter will be missing."

"Ha, you mean to kidnap her?"

"Yes."

"Well, we will be ready to give you all the assistance needed when the time comes, chief."

"Good!"

After some further talk the chief of the band said that he had forgotten all about the wine, and that if one or two



the men would accompany him to the cellar, they would get some more wine.

"I don't care about going down there alone, again," he said, frankly. "My late assailant might be there, and next time he might do more than smother me a bit."

Three of the men went with the leader, and they found no sign of anyone in the cellar.

Loading themselves down with bottles of wine, they made their way back upstairs, and to the library, where they placed the bottles on the table.

"You didn't see anything of your assailant, Lewis?" asked one.

"No; nothing at all," was the reply. "I guess he is satisfied with what he has already done, and it is well for him that such is the case."

## CHAPTER VI.

### BOB DOWNS A SENTINEL.

Dick Slater did not wait long before taking his departure from the home of Mr. Carlton.

He was eager to be away, and so, bidding Mr. Carlton and Minnie good-by, he slipped out by the rear entrance, and stole away.

He made his way to a livery-stable where he had left a horse on coming to the city, and when the horse had been bridled and saddled he paid his score, mounted and rode away.

He rode slowly and carelessly along till he was out of the city, and across the common, and passing the sentinel after some clever work, urged his horse forward at a gallop.

An hour and a half later he was in the patriot encampment on Harlem Heights.

He went at once to the headquarters occupied by the commander-in-chief.

"Have you learned anything of importance, Dick?" asked the great man, after he had greeted the youth.

"I saw Mr. Carlton, the patriot, your excellency," replied Dick, "and he gave me this letter to give to you. He said it contains some important information."

The youth extended the letter as he spoke, and General Washington took it, opened it, and read the contents.

When he had finished he nodded his head.

"Good; very good," he said. "Yes, Dick, this is important information."

"I am glad of that, sir."

The great man was silent for a few minutes, and then said:

"It will be necessary for me to keep myself informed regarding the movements of the British, and to that end I think I shall send you back to New York."

"Very well, sir."

"You had better take two or three comrades with you,

so that you may be enabled to send me messages as often as is necessary."

"I will do so."

"Very good; there is no need of your returning to-night, Dick; but to-morrow night will do, and then you can stay as long as is necessary or advisable."

"I will do as you say, your excellency."

"Very well. Come to me for final instructions to-morrow evening before taking your departure."

"I will do so."

Then Dick saluted, bade the commander-in-chief good-night, and went to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

Next morning he was up bright and early.

It was the 19th day of September.

Three days before, on the 16th, the battle of Harlem Heights had been fought, and the British had been repulsed with considerable loss of life.

In that battle the "Liberty Boys" had fought bravely, as was already told in a former "Liberty Boys" story.

The youths were always eager to fight, and when they saw Dick among them that morning, they asked him many eager questions.

They knew he had been to New York on a spying expedition the night before, and they wanted to know what chances there were that there would be another battle.

The youth could not tell them, and they were disappointed.

"Oh, I wish the redcoats would come up and have another try at us, here!" said Bob Estabrook, one of Dick's chums. "I didn't begin to get enough fighting the other day."

"Neither did any of us," said Mark Morrison.

"I don't think they will attack us again while we are here on the Heights," said Dick.

"You don't?" remarked Bob, in a disappointed tone.

"No."

"Why?"

"Because they tried it once, and found they could not make any headway. They won't care to make another attempt. At least that is my idea of it."

"Jove, that is bad. I was in hopes you had learned down in the city that the British were coming to make another attack on us."

"No, nothing of the kind."

"And we shall just have to sit here and do nothing?" groaned Bob.

"I'll give you something to do, Bob."

"What, Dick?" brightening up.

"Why, I am going back down to the city to-night, and you may go with me."

"Good! That will beat sitting here."

"I shall take Mark and Sam along, also, as I will wish to send messages back up here to the commander-in-chief."

Mark Morrison and Sam Sanderson were delighted when they heard Dick say this, but the rest of the youths did not look so happy.



"We'll just have to sit here and suck our thumbs, I suppose, Dick?" said one, a sour look on his face.

"I guess that is about it, Dave," smiled Dick.

The day passed quietly. There was no signs of the British to be seen anywhere, and the soldiers lolled lazily around, taking things easy.

As soon as it was dark, however, the four "Liberty Boys" who were to go to New York mounted their horses and set out.

They did not take their muskets, but each youth had four pistols and a knife in his belt.

They did not wish or expect to get into a fight down in the city, but would be ready for it if they were forced to do so.

They rode at a gallop, and an hour and a half later were close to the common.

They paused then, and Dick advised that they enter the city separately.

"We might attract unwelcome attention if we were to go in together," he said.

"That's so," agreed Bob. "But where will we get together again?"

"In front of Trinity church."

"That's a good place, Dick. We all know where that is."

"On second thought, I think we had better meet on the street back of Trinity," said Dick. "We might attract attention if we were to come together on Broadway, on horseback."

"All right. We will meet on the street back of the church, then."

This having been decided, the youths separated, and rode slowly away, each heading toward a different street.

Half an hour later Dick, Mark, and Sam had met on church street, but Bob had not yet put in an appearance.

"I wonder what is keeping him?" remarked Dick, in an anxious voice.

"Hard telling," replied Mark.

"He'll be along in a few moments, doubtless," said Sam.

As he spoke Bob came riding around the corner, and was soon beside them.

"What made you so long getting here, Bob?" asked Dick.

"I ran across a stubborn sentinel, Dick."

"Ah, that was it?"

"Yes. He didn't want to let me pass."

"No?"

"No; he said boys ought to be at home and in bed at this time of the night, instead of riding around, but I differed with him, of course."

"What did you do?"

"I told him I was coming into the city on business of importance, and that he must not stop me."

"Then he let you pass, eh?"

"No."

"He didn't?"

"Not a bit of it. He was stubborn, I tell you. He said

for me to go home, that no boy like me could have business of importance, and he wouldn't listen to reason at all."

"What did you do?"

"I argued with him for quite a while, and knowing I was having no effect, I was quietly getting a pistol out, and when I had succeeded, and had got hold of the barrel of the weapon, I suddenly cracked the redcoat over the head with the butt of the pistol."

"That was rather a risky bit of business, Bob," said Dick.

"Did you drop him?" asked Mark.

"I rather guess I did," with a grin. "He went down like a stone."

"And were there no people close around who tried to capture you?" asked Dick.

"Oh, yes. There were a lot of people close at hand, but I dashed down the street at full speed, and they didn't have time to try to head me off."

"Do you think you were followed, Bob?" inquired Dick, glancing up and down the street.

"I don't think so."

"Well, we had better get away from here at once, anyway, and not take any more chances than we have to. Come, I know where there is a livery stable not far away."

The youth rode away, followed by his three comrades, and soon they reached a livery stable on a side street.

They dismounted and turned their horses over to the stable boy.

"We may leave the horses here several days," said Dick. "If you like we will pay for a day in advance, and one of us will come each succeeding day and pay you."

"Very well," said the stableman, and then Dick paid for the keep of the horses for a day in advance.

Then they took their departure, and made their way out onto Broadway.

They had not gone far before they met two redcoats, and then a third whose head was bandaged. Behind the first were perhaps a dozen more redcoats, following along.

The four "Liberty Boys" were looking at something across the street, and did not see the redcoats till the last were almost upon them, and then they stepped aside.

"That's the fellow I cracked over the head with the butt of my pistol," Bob whispered to Dick, and as he did so a man with the bandaged head happened to catch sight of the youth's face.

"There's the young scoundrel who hit me over the head with the pistol-butt!" the redcoat cried, eagerly and angrily. "Seize him, fellows. Don't let him get away, whatever you do."

The redcoats leaped forward, intent on seizing Bob, and the next moment a lively combat was in progress.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS'" BIG RISK.

The "Liberty Boys" were outnumbered more than ten to one, but that made no difference. They never stopped to think of a little thing like that.



They had such confidence in their abilities that they could have fought if the odds had been four or five to one.

The combat was a lively one indeed, and the redcoats soon found that, in spite of the fact that they outnumbered their opponents greatly, they were not more than able to hold their own, even if they could do that.

The "Liberty Boys" fought fiercely, desperately, and as all four were expert with their fists, and were, moreover, young, strong, and athletic fellows, they were enabled to do a great deal of damage, and at the same time avoid receiving much themselves.

One after another the redcoats were knocked down, and with each foe's downfall cries of amazement went up from the spectators, who could not understand how four youths could handle more than a dozen British soldiers so roughly.

Suddenly Dick caught sight of another party of redcoats coming on the run, and he told his comrades that they would have to run for it.

"They will be too many for us," he said, "and we must get away at once. Follow me."

With the words Dick whirled and darted away across the street, and his three comrades followed suit.

"After them," roared the redcoat with the bandaged head. "Don't let them escape."

Those of the redcoats who were on their feet followed the fleeing youths, and those who had been knocked down scrambled to their feet as quickly as possible and followed their comrades.

The other party of redcoats appeared on the scene at this moment, and the redcoat with the sore head told them what was going on, and advised them to follow and help capture the four youths, who, he assured them, must be rebels.

The redcoats waited to hear no more, but darted away in pursuit.

The "Liberty Boys" were good runners, but of course they could not run at their best speed on the street, for there were people in the way almost at every turn, and Dick was lost in avoiding them. The redcoats had to put up with the same inconvenience, however, so it was about the same thing so far as that was concerned.

Down the street dashed the "Liberty Boys," and after them dashed the redcoats.

It was an exciting chase.

Certainly those who witnessed it thought so, and many were the yells of encouragement given utterance to by the people along the route, some yelling for the boys, and some for their pursuers.

At last the youths found themselves in what looked to be a trap.

They were in a narrow street, with a solid row of buildings on either side. Behind them were a score or more of pursuers, and now they saw a party of redcoats coming down the street toward them.

To stop meant capture; to go on meant capture, for there were at least twenty of the newcomers. What, then, should they do?

This was the question which the youths asked themselves and even as the question flashed through their minds, Dick answered it by darting up the steps leading to a stoop near at hand, and dashed through an open doorway, a servant having just opened the door, evidently impelled to the act by curiosity to see what the excitement was about.

The other three youths followed Dick's lead, and the four bounded along the hall, and up the stairs to the second floor.

Knowing they would be pursued, the youths did not stop here, but went on up to the third floor.

They heard the sound of excited voices below, and made their way up into the attic, and climbed out onto the roof which proved to be flat.

They paused here, and drew their pistols.

"We will make a stand here," said Dick, "and I think we will be able to drive the redcoats back."

They waited, and kept watch down through the scuttle hole, but to their surprise no redcoats put in an appearance.

Up from below came a murmur of voices, however, and the youths were sure their pursuers would put in an appearance at any moment.

A minute passed, and still the redcoats did not appear.

The youths wondered at this.

They could not understand it.

What was keeping their pursuers back?

"They are getting ready to play some kind of a trick on us," said Bob.

"Quite likely," agreed Dick.

"Yes," said Sam, "or they would have been up here before this."

Mark had his head over the opening to see if roof, and was looking down and listening intently. shaking

Suddenly he sniffed.

"Seems to me I smell smoke," he said.

The other three stuck their heads over the opening and were soon satisfied that Mark was right.

They all smelled smoke, and plainly at that.

It smelled like burning wood.

"I wonder what causes the smoke?" remarked Dick thoughtfully.

"Say, do you suppose the house is on fire?" exclaimed Mark, suddenly.

"Jove, it is possible," exclaimed Bob.

"I should not be surprised," said Dick. "The smell of the smoke seems to be growing stronger all the time."

The others nodded their heads in assent.

"You are right about that," said Bob.

Sam Sanderson made his way across to the edge of the roof, and looked down in the street.

"Great Guns, boys!" he shouted, "the house is on fire sure enough, and the street is full of people."

The others hastened over and joined him.

They looked down and saw hundreds of people in the street below.

The people were yelling, and rushing about excitedly.



Many were carrying buckets filled with water, while others were handing furniture out through open windows.

"It looks as if the house is doomed," said Dick soberly.

"And if so, what will become of us?" asked Mark.

"We will be doomed, also, unless we can get down from the top of the building."

"Perhaps we may be able to get down through the house the way we came up," suggested Bob.

"We would be sure to be captured if we could do so," said Dick.

"Perhaps not. Perhaps we may be able to get out the rear way and escape."

"Escape is cut off that way also. The alley is filled with redcoats."

"Then what are we to do?"

They made their way back to the scuttle-hole, only to find a thick volume of smoke coming up through it.

"A fellow would speedily be overcome by the smoke if he were to go down through there now," said Dick.

The others nodded assent.

"What are we to do, then?" asked Bob.

Dick walked to the righthand side of the roof, and looked down. It was thirty feet at least to the roof of the adjoining building, and of course such a jump would likely result in death or severe injuries; and even after reaching the roof they would be in almost as bad a fix as ever.

He walked across to the lefthand side of the roof of the house they were on. It was the same on this side, being about thirty feet down to the adjoining roof.

Then Dick walked to the edge of the roof at the rear, and looked across the alley at the building on the opposite side.

This building <sup>in rear</sup> was quite tall, and the roof was not more than ten feet <sup>or later</sup> the one they were on. It was perhaps a few feet distant, but never, and to reach it it would be necessary to leap across the alley.

"It would be a big risk, but one will risk a great deal if there is any chance to save one's life. Anything would be better than remaining where they were, and being burned to death."

After Dick had measured the distance with his eyes he turned to his comrades.

"What do you think about it, boys?" he asked, "are you good for a jump across the chasm?"

"I am," said Bob.

"And I," from Mark.

"I'd rather risk it than to remain here," said Sam.

"It's a big risk," said Dick, "but we are used to taking chances."

"Yes, indeed," said Bob. "I'm ready to attempt it whenever you say so, Dick."

"Well, I guess there isn't any use of waiting, boys. We might as well make the attempt, and have done with it. All go first."

"All right, Dick."

"It was a big risk, but the 'Liberty Boys' were used to taking chances, and one after another they leaped from the

roof of the burning building to the roof of the building across the alley.

Sam Sanderson was the last to make the leap, and staggered when he alighted, and would have fallen backward to the ground had the others not seized him, and drawn him safely away from the edge of the roof.

But they were safe across the alley. They were safe on the roof of a building that probably would not burn down, but the next thing to do was to get to the ground and make their escape from the vicinity.

There was a scuttle in the roof, but when they tried to open it they found it was fastened.

They pulled and tugged with all their might, but could not budge the scuttle cover, and finally were forced to give up the attempt to open it.

Then Dick made a tour of investigation, and discovered a wooden water-spout at one corner, which reached to the ground.

He tested the water-pipe, and found that it was quite strong.

"I believe it will hold the weight of one of us," he said.

"Are you boys willing to make the attempt to slide down it to the ground?"

"Yes," said Bob. "We've got to get away from here somehow, and that seems to be the only way of doing it."

"Well, I'll go first and see how it works," said Dick.

He let himself cautiously over the edge of the roof, seized hold of the water-spout, and began making his way slowly and carefully down.

He was watched eagerly by his comrades, and when they saw him reach the ground in safety a sigh of relief and satisfaction escaped the lips of each.

"You next, Mark," said Bob.

Mark Morrison let himself over the edge, grasped the water-spout, and slid down, slowly and carefully. He reached the bottom in safety, and then Sam Sanderson followed.

As soon as he had reached the ground Bob followed. He moved as slowly and carefully as the others had done, but it may be that their weight had gradually pulled the fastenings loose, and when Bob was within ten feet of the ground the fastenings gave way altogether and down came water-spout and Bob in a pile.

Dick managed to break Bob's fall somewhat, and the youth was merely shaken up a bit, while Sam got a thump on the head from a section of the spout.

No one was seriously hurt, however, and they were now more on solid ground.

"Now let's be getting away from here before we are covered, boys," said Dick.

As they started to go away a score of redcoats came running around the corner of the adjoining building, and edged straight toward the youths.

"Surrender!" cried the leader. "Surrender, you rebels!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

## MINNIE'S DISAPPEARANCE.

But the four brave "Liberty Boys" had encountered and escaped from other perils that night, and they were determined not to surrender without a struggle.

They whirled and dashed across the street.

"Stop!" again roared the redcoat leader. "Stop or die!" The youths only ran the faster.

They separated, however, for they anticipated a volley, and felt that they would be less likely to be hit by the bullets of their enemies if separated than if in a bunch.

And in this they were correct. The redcoats did fire, but they waited too long, and the youths were quite a distance off, and the bullets failed to do much damage.

Bob was hit by a bullet, but it was only a flesh wound, a slight one at that, so it did not cause him to stop.

The sting of the wound angered the "Liberty Boy," however, and whipping out a pistol, he pointed the muzzle back at his shoulder and fired.

A loud yell of pain and rage combined went up from one of the pursuing redcoats, and he stopped and began hopping about at a great rate. The bullet from Bob's pistol wounded him in the leg.

"There. I wonder how you like that?" remarked Bob lightly. "I guess you are not the only ones who can shoot." The redcoats kept up the chase, but the "Liberty Boys" were too swift for them, and finally they were forced to give up and stop.

"Those fellows run like hounds," growled one fellow.

"They certainly are good runners," agreed another.

The four "Liberty Boys" got together again, half an hour later and went around in front of the building that had been on fire.

They found that the house had not burned down, after the fire having been extinguished. But the interior was very much ruined by the flames.

Dick asked a man how the fire had started, and was told that some rebels had caused it. In running into the house, the man said, the "rebels" had knocked a lighted candle out of a servant's hand, and the candle had set a lace curtain on fire, and the fire had spread so rapidly as to make it impossible for it to be extinguished.

The crowd had mostly dispersed, and the youths moved on, discussing the situation.

"What is next on the programme, Dick?" asked Bob.

"We will go to a tavern and secure rooms, Bob," said Dick; "that wound of yours needs attention."

"Bah, it is nothing—a mere scratch," was the reply, lightly spoken.

Nevertheless we will go to a tavern and engage rooms, then we will begin to lay our plans."

They made their way to a tavern on a cross street, where they would not be so likely to attract attention coming and going from the place.

They secured two rooms, and went to them, and Dick, who was something of an expert at such work, dressed and bandaged Bob's wound.

It was not severe, but would be the better for having attention.

Then they talked their plans over.

"I will go out and take a run around, boys," said Dick, finally. "You stay here. I won't be gone long."

The three said all right, and Dick took his departure.

He made his way to Broadway, and down the street.

After having spent half an hour on this street, without having learned anything of importance, he made his way to the home of Gerald Carlton, the patriot.

There was a light in the hall, and Dick ran up the steps, and knocked.

Presently the door was opened by the servant girl.

"Is your master, Mr. Carlton, in?" the youth asked.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "Who shall I say wishes to see him?"

The youth gave a quick glance around, and seeing no one near, said in a low voice::

"Tell him Dick Slater wishes to see him."

"Step inside," said the servant, and the youth did so.

"This way, sir."

The servant conducted Dick to the door of the library, and motioned for him to enter.

"I will tell the master you are here," she said, and was gone.

The youth entered the library and took a seat.

He had been there but a few minutes when Mr. Carlton came hastily into the room.

"Ah, Mr. Slater, I am indeed glad to see you," the man exclaimed, taking the youth's hand and shaking it heartily.

"And I am glad to see you again, sir."

"Thanks. But, Dick, I have met with a great misfortune."

"Why, what has happened, sir?" cried Dick, who noted the sad cadence in the man's voice.

"Minnie, my daughter, has disappeared, and I can find no traces of her!"

"Your daughter has disappeared?"

The "Liberty Boy" was surprised, and horrified as well.

"Yes, Dick." The man's voice was inexpressibly sad.

"You have searched for her?"

"Yes, yes."

"When did she disappear?"

"This morning."

"Have you any idea what has become of her, sir?"

The man hesitated, and then he said:

"I have been somewhat suspicious that that scoundrel next door might have had something to do with it, Dick."

"Henry Lewis, the chief of the band of would-be robbers, eh?"

"Yes; he has long been wanting to pay addresses to Minnie, but I would not have him in my house, and so he was foiled; but I fear he has kidnapped her, hoping to force her into a marriage with him."



Dick was silent a few moments, and then he said:  
 "Have you accused him of it?"  
 "Yes. I went to him at once, and told him I suspected him."  
 "What did he say and do?"  
 "He merely laughed in my face, and told me I was wrong in suspecting him."  
 "Of course he would say that."  
 "Of course."  
 Again Dick was silent for a few moments, and then he said:  
 "Mr. Carlton, do you know how to open the movable section in the wall in the cellar?"  
 The man started.  
 "Yes, Dick," he replied.  
 "Good! Then before very long we will know whether or not your daughter is in Lewis' house."  
 "You mean to enter his house and make a search?"  
 "Yes."  
 "But he has ten men in there with him, and it would be suicidal to venture."  
 "I have three comrades not far from here, at a tavern, Mr. Carlton. I will go and get them, and with you there will be five of us. I think we will be equal to the task of thrashing the scoundrels if they should discover our presence and try to kill us."  
 "Good. That will be all right, Dick," cried Mr. Carlton eagerly. "I would like to put a bullet through that scoundrel Lewis, and if we meet in battle array I will do it, too."  
 "I will go and bring my comrades, sir. Wait here quietly your trick."  
 "Ha, it is"  
 "Yes, it is," left the house, and hastened back to the tavern.  
 The three youths saw that Dick was somewhat excited, and questioned him eagerly.  
 "What's up, Dick?"  
 "Have you learned something of importance?"  
 "What is it, anyway?"  
 "I have some work for you, boys," said Dick.  
 "Good."  
 "We are glad to hear it."  
 "What is the work?"  
 "You remember I told you about Gerald Carlton, the patriot, and his pretty daughter Minnie?" asked Dick.  
 "Yes, yes."  
 "Well, I have just been to Mr. Carlton's home, and he tells me that his daughter has disappeared most mysteriously."  
 "You don't tell us."  
 "That is bad."  
 "What does he think has become of her?"  
 "He thinks she has been kidnapped."  
 "Kidnapped!" in chorus.  
 "Yes; there's a fellow living next door—I told you about him, the fellow who trapped me in the trick chair and dropped me into his cellar, you know—who is in love with

Minnie, and he has been trying to pay his addresses to but Mr. Carlton would not have it, and now he thinks fellow, Lewis, has kidnapped Minnie."

"And you want that we shall go and enter the drel's house and make him give the girl up, Dick?" Bob.

"Yes; at least, we will enter his house and search from cellar to garret, and if the girl is there, we will find her."

"Good! We are with you in that, eh, fellows?"

The others nodded assent.

"You lead the way, Dick, and we will back you up," said Mark Morrison, decidedly.

"All right; come along, boys," said Dick. "I know a way to enter Lewis' house without his knowledge, and we will be able to find Minnie Carlton, if she is in there, without a doubt, confident."

The four youths left the tavern, and made their way to the Carlton home.

The servant girl admitted them, and they went to the library.

Mr. Carlton greeted them joyously.

"Now we will soon know whether or not my daughter is in the house of that scoundrel, Henry P. Lewis," he said. "Are you ready, Mr. Slater?"

"We are ready, sir," was the reply.

"Then come."

Taking up a candle, the man led the way out of the library, along the hall, and into the kitchen. Here he reached the door leading to the cellar-stairs, and passed a few steps, the youths keeping close at his heels.

He walked straight to the point where the swing of the stone wall was located, and placing his foot on a certain place, pushed.

The section swung slowly outward, revealing an opening three feet wide and four feet high.

Dick's three comrades, to whom this was something new and unexpected, looked at one another wonderingly.

"This beats anything I have seen lately," whispered Mark Morrison.

The other nodded assent.

The five passed through the opening, and were in the cellar under Lewis' house.

Mr. Carlton pushed the section back into place, and turned an inquiring look on Dick.

"Now, what?" he asked in a whisper.

"We will go upstairs and see if we can locate Lewis and his men," said Dick.

"You take command, Mr. Slater," said the man, and handed Dick the candle.

"Very well, sir."

The youth took the candle and led the way up the stairs to the kitchen door.

He tried the door, and found it unfastened.

"We are in luck," he whispered, and opening the door he passed through into the kitchen.



to others followed at his heels, and then all paused and looked.

a sound was to be heard.

was silence.

"You stay here while I go and reconnoiter," whispered

"I think it advisable that we know where the enemy is stationed before we begin our search for the girl."

The others nodded assent, and handing the candle to Dick, he stole out into the hall, and made his way along it as silently as a shadow.

He was soon at the door of the library, and he heard the murmur of voices, and saw a faint streak of light gleaming out underneath the door.

He placed his ear to the keyhole and listened.

He could distinguish words now.

It was a delight Lewis and his men were talking of the danger of all things that Dick would have wished to avoid, viz., the girl, Minnie Carlton.

"I suppose the old fool, Carlton, is pretty badly cut up by the disappearance of the girl, eh, Lewis?" was the first remark heard said.

"His?" came the reply in Lewis' voice. "He looked all right, and"—with a scornful laugh—"he looked at me as if he would like to murder me; but that was all it amounted to. He could not prove that I had anything to do with the disappearance of the girl, and did not dare to do anything."

"That's right. He is helpless, and his daughter is here to hear the sound of his voice, too. Ha, ha, ha!"

"To-day, ha! That's a good joke on the old rascal!" said Lewis up voice, and then all laughed in chorus.

Thousands of the "Liberty Boy" clenched, and a grim smile settled on his face.

"You cowardly scoundrel," he said to himself, "you deserve no mercy, and if it comes to a fight between you and me, to-night, we will show you no mercy. Such treacherous scoundrels are better out of the world than they are."

"How does the girl take her imprisonment, cap?" asked Lewis when the laughter had subsided.

"She doesn't take it very calmly," was the reply, in Lewis' voice. "She is a regular little tigress."

"Oh, I guess you will be able to tame her, eh, chief?" said Carlton. "I think so. I am going to try starving her, and see how she holds out under such treatment."

"You villain," said Dick to himself.

Lewis waited to hear no more. He had learned that the girl was in the house, and he felt sure they would be able to get her by searching.

He turned and stole away, along the hall. When he reached the kitchen he told his comrades what he had discovered.

Carlton was greatly excited and agitated.

"My darling daughter is in this house!" he murmured.

"We will rescue her, or we will wipe the band of traitors out of existence."

"That is what we will do, sir," said Dick. "And now, follow me. We will begin the search for your daughter."

The "Liberty Boy" felt sure that the girl would be found in a room upstairs, and he at once led the way up to the second floor.

They at once began looking into the rooms on this floor, and at last they came to a door that was locked.

Dick rapped lightly on the door, and then listened at the keyhole.

"Who is there?" he heard in a low, tremulous voice.

"Your father, Miss Minnie," replied Dick, with his lips at the keyhole, "and Dick Slater and some more friends."

"Thank God!" he heard the girl exclaim in a low but eager voice. "Then I will be saved."

"How are we to get the door open?" whispered Mr. Carlton.

"There is only one way, I think," replied Dick.

"And that?"

"Is to burst it open."

"But will not that be heard by the villains downstairs?"

"I fear so. But it can't be helped."

"Well, go ahead and burst the door, Mr. Slater. Whatever you think best to do, that we will do."

"We will in all probability have to fight the scoundrels," whispered Dick, "but it will be their fault, not ours, and their blood will be on their own heads."

"True."

"And if it comes to a fight, boys," said Dick, "shoot to kill. There is no use of having any halfway business with such villains. They are better out of the world than in it."

"All right, Dick."

"I am confident that if we don't kill them," said Dick. Then he added: "A good deal to do."

"Place your shoulders against the door, boys, and when I give the word push with all your might."

The youths did as directed.

Then Dick gave the word, and they surged against the door with all their force.

The door was not a very strong one, and it gave way, with a crash which all were sure could not well help being heard by the men downstairs.

Mr. Carlton, eager and excited, leaped into the room and clasped his daughter to his breast, but Dick and his three comrades listened intently.

They heard the sound of trampling feet below stairs, heard a door open, and then the trampling sounded louder.

The men were coming to see what had caused the noise they had heard.

They would be upstairs in a few moments.

"We will have to fight them, boys," said Dick. "Into the room, quick. And make every shot count, for we have a desperate gang to contend with."

The youths entered the room, and Dick told the girl to take up her position in the farther corner of the room. The girl obeyed, and Dick turned a table down on its side, and placed it in front of her, so that the top would serve as a sort of shield against the bullets.



By the time he had done this the footsteps of the approaching men were heard in the upstairs hall.

Dick drew his pistols and cocked them, and noted that each of his four companions held two pistols, ready cocked.

"Good!" he nodded. "When I give the word give it to them. And then draw the other two pistols, and fire a second volley."

The four nodded understandingly.

The enemy was almost at the door by this time, and not wishing to kill anybody without first giving them a chance, Dick called out in a clear, ringing voice:

"Halt! If you show yourselves in front of the door, we will fire upon you—and I give you fair warning that we will shoot to kill!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### A DEADLY ENCOUNTER.

There was no mistaking the fact that Dick meant what he said. His tone indicated as much, and the advancing party of men came to a halt on the instant, as if one man.

"Who are you?" came in Lewis' voice.

"You know who I am, well enough, you villain," the youth replied.

"I have heard your voice, but I am not sure that I know who you are."

"Have you forgotten the young man you entrapped in your trick armchair last night?"

"Ha, it is Dick Slater," Lewis cried.

"Ha, it is Dick Slater."

"Good. I am glad of it. We will capture you this time, and win the reward."

"You will do nothing of the kind, and I warn you not to attempt it."

"Bah!"

"If you and your men come in sight we will open fire upon you, and as there are five of us, and all are dead shots, you will simply be committing suicide. Be warned."

"Bosh. I don't believe there are five of you, and even if there are we have eleven, and will be able to overcome you."

"You will find out your mistake, when you make the attempt, but it will be too late to do you any good then."

"Bah! One rush, and you will be in our power."

"Be warned," said Dick. "If you attempt to enter this room your blood will be upon your own heads, for we shall shoot to kill."

The reply was a sudden rush of footsteps. The next instant the party of men appeared in sight, and true to their word the five fired two volleys.

Crash—roar!

Crash—roar!

The volleys were fired coolly and calmly, and were deadly in effect.

Nine of the men went down, dead or badly wounded; the remaining two turned and fled for their lives.

"They will bring a crowd of redcoats here," exclaimed Mr. Carlton. "Let us get away as quickly as possible."

"Very well," said Dick. "Come, Miss Minnie, girl. I guess the fight is over."

The girl stepped out from behind the barricade, went with her father out of the room, while Dick and three comrades followed, after taking a look at the dead and wounded men.

Lewis was dead, a bullet having struck him fair in the eyes, and five more of the men were dead. Three were wounded, and the "Liberty Boys" decided that two of them would die. One had a wound that was necessarily fatal.

"I gave your leader fair warning," Dick said to the man, who was able to understand. "He would have known this is his fault, not ours."

"I guess you are right about that," the man replied with a scowl. "But it doesn't make me think any more of fellows."

"No, I suppose not. Still, you cannot justly blame us for shooting you."

"Perhaps not," with a groan, "but if I knew well of you it was that gave me this bullet-wound. I want to get even with him, some time."

"You would do better to be thanking your luck that you are alive," said Dick. "You ought to thank the man who shot you, instead of to harbor malice against him, for you are much better off than your comrades here."

"Well, there may be something in that."

Then Dick and his three comrades followed Mr. Carlton and Minnie out of the room and along the hall. As they went, along that hall, and into the kitchen, just as they entered the kitchen, they heard voices in the front stoop, and the door opened, and a party of men came filing into the house.

"We were just in time," said Dick. "Now, we can go downstairs and across into the cellar under your house, Mr. Carlton."

They hastened down into the cellar, and the section of the wall was pushed back into its place.

"Now, I think we had better stay here for a while," said Dick, "until we are enabled to find out whether the redcoats know who did the work upstairs in this house."

"That wounded man will tell them," said Bob.

"He may, and again he may not," said Dick. "I will go back and spy on them, and find out about it."

"All right," said Bob. "But you want to be careful."

"I will."

The "Liberty Boy" knew the manner of opening the door, and opening it, passed through into the cellar, and pushed the section shut again.

He stole up the steps and into the kitchen. At the door he paused and listened. Upstairs he could hear the murmur of voices, and he stole along the hall and up the



the head of the stairs he paused, and made an observation. The redcoats were discussing the matter in vigorous language. The man who had been only wounded was telling the redcoats about the combat, and he said that the man had been killed by rebels, led by the famous Dick Slater.

"Excited the redcoats, and they were eager to begin the search for the youth in question."

"He may earn the five hundred pounds reward that has been offered for his capture," said one.

"We are three more young fellows with him," the wounded man went on, "and I think they are members of the famous band known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.'"

"To capture all four of them," cried a redcoat.

"And with the four was a rebel who lives next door to the wounded man," the wounded man went on. "His name is Gerry Slater, and if you don't find the five of them in this house you will likely find them in the house adjoining."

"A search this house, and if we don't find them here, we will search the other house," a redcoat declared.

"What about these dead and wounded men, lieutenant?" asked one of the redcoats.

"If you stay here and dress the wounds of the three men, as best you can, while the rest of us go in to get that crowd this fellow tells about," was the reply.

"We are coming right along, to search the house, so I thought had better be getting away from here," thought Dick.

"He turned and stole back down the stairs, and then took the way to the kitchen, and back down into the cellar."

"There he made his way into the adjoining cellar, and startled the party."

"What did you learn?" from Mr. Carlton.

"I don't know who killed the men," replied Dick. "The man told them."

"Would he mention my name?" anxiously.

"No! Then they will search my house, likely."

"They announced their intention of doing so, in case they failed to find us in the other house."

"Then Minnie and I had better get away from here, don't you think?"

"Yes, for awhile, at least. Is there any place you can go for a week or so?"

"Yes. I have a brother living in another part of the city. I can go there."

"Then you had better do so."

"We will go right up and instruct the servant girl to tell all callers that we have gone to the country," said Mr. Carlton; "and then we will take our departure before the rebels come."

"That will be best."

"They hastened upstairs, and Mr. Carlton told the servant that he and Minnie were going away for a week or so,

until matters got more quiet, and for her to remain and tell all who came that they had gone to the country.

The girl said she would do so, and then Minnie hastily gathered some clothing, while Mr. Carlton secured his valuable papers, etc., and then in company with the "Liberty Boys" they stole out by the rear entrance and away up the alley to the next street.

Here they bade the "Liberty Boys" good-by, after thanking them for rescuing Minnie from Lewis' power, and took their departure, going in the direction of the home of Mr. Carlton's brother.

The "Liberty Boys" set out for the tavern, and reached there without further adventure, though they paused several times to listen to the talk on the street, the news having gone out that a number of men had been killed in a fight with rebels in a house in the lower part of the city.

There was great excitement, and soon the youths heard their names mentioned on all sides, by redcoats and Tories.

"Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' in the city, and engaged in killing loyal king's men," they heard one man shout. "It is outrageous. We should hunt the scoundrels down and shoot them as if they were dogs!"

"Phew!" whistled Bob. "That fellow is fierce, isn't he?"

"Yes; and you may be sure he would run the first one of all, if he should suddenly run up against the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"If it wasn't so dangerous I'd like to give him a scare," grinned Bob.

"It won't do to take any risks, Bob," said Dick. "We will have to be on our guard, as it is."

"That's so."

There was a note of disappointment in Bob's voice, however. It was plain that he would have given a good deal to have been able to give the fellow a fright.

When they entered the tavern they found several men, evidently Tories, drinking and discussing the affair in loud, angry voices.

"It is the most daring piece of business that ever I heard of!" declared one.

"Yes, but Dick Slater and those 'Liberty Boys' are just the kind of fellows to do such things," remarked another.

"Yes, that's true, too."

One of the men happened to notice Dick and his comrades, and when they had gone on through the combined office and bar-room, and had disappeared, he spoke to the rest, and said:

"Say, did you see the four fellows who went through here a minute ago?"

"I noticed 'em," replied one.

"What do you think about them?"

"I didn't think anything about 'em. But what do you mean?"

"Did you notice that they were young fellows?"

"Yes, I noticed that."

"Say," lowering his voice, "do you suppose they are the 'Liberty Boys' who killed those men?"



The others started, and gave utterance to exclamations of amazement.

"Surely not," cried one.

"It might be," from another.

"It isn't an impossibility."

They asked the landlord about the four, and he could only tell them that the youths had entered his tavern earlier in the evening and engaged rooms.

"Of course they might be the 'Liberty Boys,'" he said, "but I don't believe they are."

"Let's go up and have a talk with them, anyway," said one.

"I'm willing," from another.

"And so am I," from a third.

All signified their willingness, and they rose to go upstairs, and then they hesitated and looked at one another dubiously.

"If it should happen that they are the 'Liberty Boys,' what could we do?" asked one. "They are desperate men, and would make short work of us."

"We will have a talk with them," said another, "and if we should make up our minds that they are the 'Liberty Boys,' we will go to the British headquarters and report, and have them send some soldiers to capture them."

"That is a good plan," said another. "Come along, men."

And they went trooping upstairs.

## CHAPTER X.

### Chair "LIBERTY BOYS' " ESCAPE.

Dick (S)

The young Dick heard the trampling of feet, and knew somebody was coming.

"What's up now?" asked Bob, he and Dick occupying one room, Mark and Sam the other.

"I don't know, Bob."

"Hear the trampling?"

"Yes."

"Sounds like a crowd coming."

"So it does."

"What can they want?"

Dick was listening intently, and thinking at the same time.

"I have an idea it is the gang we saw in the bar-room, Bob," he said.

"And do you suppose they have made up their minds that we are the 'Liberty Boys'?"

"I don't know. We'll have to wait and see what they want. Be ready to fight if necessary."

"I will," and Bob's eyes flashed.

Nearer and nearer sounded the footsteps, and presently the noise ceased when the owners of the feet seemed to be right in front of the door of the room.

Then there came a rap on the door.

"What's wanted?" called out Dick.

"We wish to ask you a few questions," was the reply.

"Go ahead. But please make it as few as possible. I want to go to sleep."

There was the faint murmur of whispering at the door. The men were discussing the coolness of the youth.

"All right. We want to know who you four fellows are."

"Why do you wish to know?"

"We have about made up our minds that you are 'Liberty Boys' who killed the men and caused all the trouble on the streets."

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes."

The two youths looked at each other in some doubt. They feared that they were in for trouble.

"Well, you are entirely mistaken," said Dick.

"You say we are?"

"Yes; we are not the persons you speak of."

"You are not?"

"No."

"Then who are you?"

"We are country boys."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; we live up in Westchester county."

This part of it was true; their homes were in Westchester county.

"Why are you in the city?"

"Our folks sent us on business."

"Indeed."

"Yes."

There was some more whispering among the men outside, and Dick and Bob looked at each other dubiously.

"I'm inclined to think they won't believe us, Bob," whispered Dick.

"It seems more than likely."

"In that case, what will we do?"

"Well, if they try to capture us we will show fight. But if they simply keep watch over our rooms, and for redcoats to come and make prisoners of us?"

"Well, in that case, I think it will be a good plan for us to try to make our escape before the redcoats get here."

"I guess you are right."

"Hello, in there," called a voice at this juncture.

"Well?"

"Open your door."

"What for?"

"We want to talk to you."

"You are talking to us now."

"I know; but we want to have a good, face-to-face talk."

"You mean that you want us to open the door and let the entire crowd of you jump on us, and make us prisoners, don't you?" asked Dick scornfully.

"Oh, no; I don't mean that."

"Well, we are satisfied as it is. Go ahead with your talk."

"See here; don't you know you are acting in a very uncalculated to make us very suspicious?"



we simply wish to protect ourselves. We are not the  
you seem to think we are, but we might not be able  
since you of the fact, and then we would get our-  
to trouble by letting you have a chance at us.”  
had better open the door and let us have a talk  
a.”  
must think we are fools,” cried Dick.  
we think you are the famous ‘Liberty Boys’.”  
are mistaken.”  
n’t believe it.”  
right; you don’t need to do so, if you don’t want  
we don’t any of us believe anything else but that  
the very four who killed the men in the house down  
lower part of the city.”  
a believe that, do you?”  
s.”  
ll, then, what are you going to do about it?”  
t are we going to do?”  
“I’ll soon find out.”  
ppose we will.”  
; there is no mistake about that.”  
there was quite a trampling of feet, as if the men  
king their leave.  
youths listened intently, and they were confident  
while the majority of the party had gone back to the  
m, there were two or possibly more, who had re-  
t behind, to keep watch and give the alarm if the  
tried to escape.  
ll, what’s to be done, Dick?” asked Bob.  
e must get away from here.”  
ou think they will send for some redcoats for the  
e of having us taken prisoners?”  
s.”  
ll, I’m ready for anything, Dick.”  
od! Come here, and be ready to back me up.”  
t made his way to the door, and unfastening it  
pulled the door open quickly.  
men stood in the hall, evidently on guard over the  
but before they could open their mouths to give the  
the youths had them covered with pistols, and Dick  
in a fierce, threatening voice:  
you give the alarm you die.”  
dently the two did not wish to die, for they did not  
any move toward giving the alarm, but stood mute  
motionless, and stared into the mouths of the pistols  
a look of terror on their faces.  
this moment the door of the room occupied by Mark  
Sam opened, and the youths stepped forth.  
ust in time, boys,” said Dick in a cautious voice. “Tie  
rms of these two fellows, and gag them.”  
rk and Sam hastened to obey, and two minutes later  
vo men were bound hand and foot and gagged.  
e youths then thrust the two into one of the rooms,  
tote downstairs. Knowing it would be useless to try

to get out through the bar-room, they turned and made  
their way back to the rear of the building.

The hall ran right straight back to the rear, and the  
door at the end was unfastened, so all the youths had to  
do was to open the door and walk out.

This they lost no time in doing, and then they made  
their way around to the front of the building, and glanced  
in through the window.

The men were drinking and talking excitedly, and seem-  
ed to be in good spirits.

“They think they have us bottled up in the rooms up-  
stairs,” said Dick, with a smile.

“They will meet with a surprise when they go up there  
with the redcoats to capture us,” grinned Bob.

“So they will. Well, we had better be getting away from  
here, I think.”

They turned and walked away, and half an hour later  
they were installed in a tavern quite a distance from the one  
they had left.

Feeling safe, they fastened the doors of their rooms, un-  
dressed, and went to bed and to sleep.

Meantime quite a lively scene was being enacted at the  
other tavern.

The Tories had sent word to headquarters that they had  
the four “Liberty Boys” under surveillance, and a party  
of soldiers had at once been sent for the purpose of arrest-  
ing the youths.

When they arrived at the tavern, they were greeted joy-  
ously and boisterously by the men in the bar-room, who  
assured the redcoats that they would soon have the famous  
“Liberty Boys” in their power.

“They are right upstairs, here,” said one of the men.  
“Come along, and we will show you the room they are in.”

Upstairs the entire party trooped, and <sup>Bob</sup> given a key reached  
the second floor, cries of surprise and con- <sup>Bob</sup> on escaped  
the lips of the guides.

“The guards are gone!”

“Where are Bill and Jim?”

“What has happened?”

“What does it mean?”

Then the leader of the party explained to the leader of  
the redcoats that two men had been left on guard in the  
hall, to give the alarm if the four “Liberty Boys” tried to  
escape.

The redcoat nodded.

“I understand,” he said. “Your friends have probably  
come to grief.”

As he spoke he stepped forward and tried the door of  
the room that had been occupied by Dick and Bob.

The door opened, and he stepped across the threshold,  
and glanced around.

“There are your friends,” he said grimly, pointing to  
where the two, bound and gagged, lay on the floor. “It has  
turned out about as I expected it would.”

Cries of surprise and anger escaped the lips of the mer-  
who had expected to be instrumental in causing the capture  
of the “Liberty Boys,” and they hastened to free their



two comrades, who as soon as they could regain the use of their voices, told how it had happened.

The hearers were an angry and disgusted lot, but they could do nothing, except to give utterance to exclamations of rage and disappointment. The birds had flown, the intended victims had made their escape.

"I tell you, if you want to hold the 'Liberty Boys,' you must do more than station a couple of men on guard," said the redcoat leader. "I have seen quite a good deal of the work of those fellows, and I must say that they are far from being ordinary men. They are hard to do anything with."

The entire party made its way back down to the bar-room, where liquid refreshments were indulged in, and soon all began to recover their spirits, under the potent spell of the liquid spirits.

Presently the redcoats took their departure, and making their way back to headquarters, reported that the "Liberty Boys" had made their escape before they arrived upon the scene.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BRITISH SHIPS PASS THE FORT.

Dick Slater and his three comrades remained in New York city two weeks, and every day or two one of their number made his way to Harlem Heights and told the commander-in-chief how things were going in the city.

It was difficult to learn anything of what was going on at British headquarters, but the youths managed to keep fairly well posted.

One evening, when they had been there two weeks, Dick left the youths at the tavern, and telling them to stay in till he came back, made his way to the home of Gerald Carlton.

"They may have returned to their home by this time," he thought. "I'll go and see, anyway."

He reached the house, ran up the steps and rang the bell, and when the girl came to the door he asked if Mr. Carlton and Minnie had returned to their home.

"Yes," replied the girl, who recognized Dick. "They are at home, Mr. Slater. Come in."

He entered and was shown to the library, where he was joined a few minutes later by Mr. Carlton and Minnie, who greeted him with great cordiality.

"You are back home, I see," said Dick.

"Yes, Mr. Slater; everything seemed to be quiet, so we ventured back."

"You have not been molested again?"

"No; I suppose the redcoats have something of more importance to attend to."

"Likely."

"I am very glad you have come, Dick," said Mr. Carlton, after the greetings were over. "I have some important information for you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes."

"I am glad to hear that."

"It is information which should be conveyed to the commander-in-chief at the earliest possible moment."

"It shall be carried to him this very night, sir."

"Good! I have learned, Dick, that the British are contemplating a move that they think will result in the defeat of the patriot army."

"Ah! What is the move?"

"They are going to send warships up the Hudson, past Forts Washington and Lee, and then they are going up East River with other vessels and land a large army, which is intended to cut off the retreat of the patriot army."

"That is a clever scheme," said Dick.

"Yes, and with Washington cut off from his base of supplies in Connecticut, he would soon have to surrender."

"So he would, but thanks to our having advanced knowledge of the intentions of the British, I think the commander-in-chief will be able to checkmate the enemy."

"I think so, Dick. You will take the information at once?"

"Yes, indeed. Do you know when this attempt is made?"

"Yes; some of the warships are to make the attempt to get past Forts Washington and Lee to-night."

"Ah! Then I had better go at once, and get the information to the commander-in-chief at the earliest possible moment."

"I think it will be best to do so."

The youth did not wait longer, but bade the patriot his daughter good-by, and took his departure.

"We must get up to Harlem Heights as quickly as possible," he told his comrades, as soon as he had reached the tavern; and then he told them what was in the wind.

"Will we all go, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Yes; I don't think we will have to spend much time here in the city, and might as well get out one time another. I may have to return, but I don't believe it will be necessary for the rest of you to do so."

The youths lost no time, but paid their score at the tavern and took their departure.

They went to the livery stable where they had left their horses, and paying the score, mounted and rode away.

They were soon out of the city, having dodged the sentinels in the darkness, and riding northward at a gallop.

They rode hard and fast, and an hour and a quarter later they were in the patriot encampment on Harlem Heights.

Dick went at once to headquarters.

"Ah, is it you, Dick?" General Washington exclaimed. "I am glad to see you," and he shook the youth's hand heartily.

"I have important information for you, your excellency," said Dick. And then he told what he had learned of the intentions of the British.



commander-in-chief listened eagerly. "They are going to try that plan, are they, Dick?" General Washington, when the youth had finished his story, said, "Well, sir."

"Some British warships are trying to get past our forts, you say?" said Carlton, "Well, sir."

"Good. Word must be sent to the forts at once. Take the message, Dick?" said the commander-in-chief.

"Good. Go at once to Fort Washington, and tell the commander there what you have told me, and tell him to keep a sharp lookout on the river." "Well, sir."

"Cross the river to Fort Lee, and tell the commander there the same things." "I will do so, sir."

Dick saluted and withdrew. He hastened to Fort Washington, and told General Morris what was in command at that point, what General Morris had said.

"So they are going to try to run past the forts with their warships, are they?" the general exclaimed. "That is their intention, sir," replied Dick.

"We will get ready to give them a few shots," was the general's remark. "They may get past, but we will make it as warm as possible."

Dick left Fort Washington, and hastening down the river, got in a boat and rowed across to Fort Lee. He told General Greene what was in the wind, and what the commander-in-chief had said, and the general remarked that he had been expecting some such move on the part of the British for some time.

"The commander-in-chief we will keep a sharp lookout on," he said, "and if we see any warships sneaking across the river we will open on them." "Well, sir."

Dick got in the boat and recrossed the river. He hastened back to headquarters on Harlem Heights and reported to General Washington, who nodded his head approvingly.

"Near the British will be able to get past the forts, if they make the attempt," he said, "but we can do them considerable damage while they are about it."

After doing his work, Dick went to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and went to bed. There was no alarm that night, after all.

For some reason the British did not try to get past the forts that day, however, they made the attempt in broad daylight.

At ten o'clock two frigates were seen coming up the river, and it was evident that they were going to try to get

past the forts, and also within the British encampment on the Heights.

General Washington took command at Fort Washington, and all were eager to see whether or not it would be possible to stop the British frigates, and force them to turn back.

As soon as the ships were within range the batteries in the forts opened fire, and cannon-balls zipped all around the vessels.

The guns from the ships replied, and soon a brisk cannonading was in progress.

Probably there were no more interested spectators of the affair than the "Liberty Boys," who, perched on the highest point on the Heights, watched the scene in excitement, and with great interest.

"Jove, I wish we could be in this," said Bob, with a sigh.

"It isn't our kind of fighting," said Mark Morrison.

"No; we don't handle cannon."

"I hope our fellows blow the British ships out of water."

"So do I," agreed Dick. "But I fear they will be unable to do so."

Boom, boom boom!

The cannonading was becoming brisk, and occasionally a shot came flying over the heads of the youths.

"Bah, if I couldn't beat such shooting as that I would let someone else have charge of the gun," said Bob scornfully. "To think of a gunner aiming at the fort, and then shooting clear over the Heights."

The other youths laughed at Bob.

"I am glad they are not any better gunners than that," said Dick, with a smile.

"Oh, so am I," replied Bob. "but I always hate to see poor work, I don't care who is doing it."

As a matter of fact, the American gunners in the forts were not doing much better. The majority of their shots went wide of the mark. The frigates were hit only a few times, and then they were not hit where it did much damage, and it soon became evident that unless the patriots did better work the enemy would succeed in getting past.

When General Washington saw it was more than likely that the frigates would succeed in running past, he sent word to the commanders of some small American vessels lying above the forts to fly, but they did not get started quickly enough, and the frigates got past the forts, and succeeded in capturing the vessels in question.

The commander-in-chief at once called a council of war.

At this council it was decided that there was little doubt that the British would soon make the attempt to pass up the East River and land a force which would try to get in behind them, and cut off the retreat of the patriots.

"I do not wish to retreat until it is absolutely necessary, however," said the commander-in-chief, "and so I think I will send a spy down into the city to find out just when the attempt is to be made."

The other officers approved of this course, and Dick Slater was sent for.

General Washington told him what it was that he wished done, and Dick said he would be glad to attend to the work.



"I think it will be an easy matter to learn what you wish to know, sir," he said. "I will go straight to Mr. Carlton, and likely he will be able to give me the information at once."

"Quite likely. You will go to-night, Dick?"

"Immediately after nightfall, your excellency."

"Good!"

The "Liberty Boy" made his way down to the city that night, evading the sentinel with his accustomed skill, and went at once to the home of Gerald Carlton.

He was received cordially by both Mr. Carlton and his beautiful daughter, and when the youth made known his errand the patriot nodded his head and said

"I can give you the information you seek, Dick. The British are going to start up the East River on the twelfth."

"Ah, on the twelfth, eh?"

"Yes."

"And do you know where they intend making a landing?"

"Yes. On a peninsula in the sound about nine miles up; the peninsula is known by the name of Throgg's Neck."

"I know the place. At high tide it is an island, there being a narrow strip of marsh that overflows when the tide is in."

"I have never been there myself."

"I have, and I think General Washington will be able to hold the British back from landing on the mainland for as long a time as he likes."

"That will be good."

"Yes, for it will give him all the time he will need for getting the patriot army back into the interior, out of danger of being hemmed in."

"True."

After some further conversation, Dick thanked Mr. Carlton for the information, bade him and his daughter goodbye, and took his departure.

"Now to get back to the Heights with the information," said Dick to himself.

## CHAPTER XII.

"THEY HAVE OUTWITTED US."

He was soon mounted and, getting past the sentinel unseen, rode northward at a goodly pace.

When he reached the patriot encampment on the Heights he went to headquarters, and found General Washington up and in consultation with Generals Greene, Putnam, and others.

"Ah, you are back already, Dick?" the commander-in-chief exclaimed when he saw Dick. "Then you must have learned something of importance."

"Yes, your excellency, I have learned when the British are going to make the attempt to get in behind you."

"And when is the time they have set for the affair, Dick?"

"The move is to be made on the twelfth."

"The twelfth, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And where are the British figuring on making?"

"At Throgg's Neck."

"Ah, I know where that is."

"And so do I," said General Greene. "I think we will be able to easily hold them in check there, and prevent them from reaching the mainland until we are willing they should do so."

"I think so. Well, having advance knowledge of their intentions makes us safe. We will be able to get away in time."

"And where are we to go, general?" asked Dick. "Have you decided upon that as yet?"

"I have been doing a good deal of thinking for some time past," was the reply, "and I have decided to retire to the White Plains."

"To White Plains, eh?"

"Yes."

"Let me see; that is about eighteen miles distant."

"Yes."

"And there are places there where we will be able to hold them back from attacking?"

"Yes. There are plenty of hills there. And I think we will be perfectly safe."

"And if pushed we can retire still farther back," said Dick. "What will be our other officer?"

"Yes. There is a strong position that we could hold there, only a few miles from there, at North Castle."

General Washington asked Dick a few more questions, and then told him he might go to his quarters.

The youth saluted and withdrew, and as soon as he appeared among his "Liberty Boys," he was assailed by a multitude of questions.

He motioned for the youths to be quiet, and told them in a few words just what he had learned.

"So there is a chance that we will have an engagement with the British at Throgg's Neck, eh?" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, if we are among those sent there to oppose them," replied Dick.

"Well, you must see to it that we are among them there, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes, yes," was the cry. "We don't want to march to White Plains, and leave the rest to fight it out with the redcoats. Ask General Washington to let us be among those sent to Throgg's Neck, Dick."

"All right. I will, boys," said Dick.

And he kept his word.

On the morning of the Twelfth, when the men were being selected to send on the work of holding the British in check, Dick went to the general and asked that the "Liberty Boys" be sent along with the rest.

"All right, Dick," said the commander-in-chief. "You shall go."



with hastened back and reported his success, and gave vent to a cheer of delight.

"We'll make the British wish they had not tried," said one, and the others nodded assent.

The force was ready, and it marched away toward where the British were expected to try to land.

It took up its position on the mainland, just a short distance from Throgg's Neck, and there waited.

Soon several British vessels were seen coming up the River, and they knew the enemy was at hand.

Patriot soldiers kept back out of sight, however, as they waited the redcoats to effect a landing on Throgg's

Neck. An hour later the ships had stopped near the peninsula, and were discharging the force of redcoats.

The patriots kept down out of sight till this had been accomplished, and the ships had sailed back down the river,

when the British got ready to start across the river to the mainland, they were surprised to find them-

self confronted by an army. They stood in consternation.

The officers conferred with one another. They did not

disorderly knew what to do. They had something they had not been looking for.

What should they do? They attempted to get across to the mainland, they

exposed to the fire of hundreds and hundreds of muskets.

It was a dilemma, indeed. They made an advance, finally, but were met with a

bullet, and retired to the peninsula. The officers held a council.

They did not know what to do. They supposed that their intended movement would be

known to the patriots, and that they would be enabled to land without trouble, but now realized their

mistake. In the manner the "rebels" had become cognizant of their intended move, and had been ready with a checkmate.

General Howe was greatly disappointed. They have had spies down in the city who have found

their intentions," he said. "I'll wager that I can name one of the spies," said

an officer. "Slater!"

General Howe nodded. "We have no doubt you are right," he agreed.

Much talk did no good. The "rebels" were there. What was to be done?

That was the important question. They decided to wait till nightfall, and then make an

attempt to reach the mainland. They were, however, that even if we do succeed in reaching

the mainland, it will avail us nothing," said General Howe.

"So, your excellency?" asked an officer. "It is plain enough. The rebels have knowledge of

our intentions, and there is little doubt that Washington will withdraw his army at once, and we would not be able to hem it in on Harlem Heights."

"True; I judge that you are right." The British officers were gloomy, and had not much

to say during the rest of the day. Among the patriots on the mainland, however, all was

joy and hilarity. They felt that they held the whiphand of the British

and were delighted. They laughed, talked, and sang. Indeed, so loudly did

they sing that they were heard by the redcoats over on the peninsula, and this caused the British to wax wroth.

"The impudent rebels," growled more than one redcoat.

But that was all the good their growling did them. They could not help themselves, and had to listen to the singing

of the enemy. "We'll make them sing out of the other side of their

mouths, when we get over there," growled more than one. But getting over there—that was the difficulty.

The "Liberty Boys" were the leaders in the singing and yelling.

They felt that it would make the redcoats angry, and worry them, and this was just what they wanted.

"We'll have them wanting to swim over here at high tide to get at us, pretty soon," grinned Bob, "and then we

will be able to shoot them as if they were muskrats." But the redcoats knew better than to try to swim over;

or, indeed, to try to get across the marsh in daylight. They adhered to their resolution to wait till nightfall,

even though the singing and taunting yelled by the patriots rendered them well-nigh crazy with rage.

"Just wait till night," was what all told them. They gritted their teeth and waited.

And when night came they made an attempt to reach the mainland.

Just as they were starting they met with a surprise, however.

Suddenly, all along the shore, bonfires burst into blaze, and the mainland for a mile up and down was illumined

almost as light as if by the noonday sun. The redcoats were plainly revealed, almost halfway across

the marsh, and the patriot soldiers at once opened fire, with such deadly effect that the British were forced to retreat

back to the peninsula. "The scoundrelly rebels were too smart for us, that

time," said General Howe. He was disgusted and disappointed, but he could not help admiring the shrewdness of

the enemy. "That bonfire business is a great scheme," said another officer.

"Yes; it makes it as dangerous for us to try to reach the shore at night as in the daytime."

The bonfires had been the suggestion of Dick Slater. He had been present at a council held by the officers, in

the evening, and when he heard them talking as if they



feared the British would be enabled to get ashore under cover of the darkness he suggested that wood be collected and bonfires be built as soon as it grew dark.

The suggestion had been hailed with delight.

It was just the thing, General Greene had said, and the soldiers were at once set to gathering wood.

The mainland was covered with a scrubby growth of timber, plenty of dead limbs were to be found, and large quantities were collected and placed in piles all along the shore.

When night came, and it was too dark to see more than a short distance, the piles of wood were set on fire, and the blazing fires were the result.

After the volleys had been fired, and the redcoats had retreated to the peninsula, the patriot soldiers set up a wild yell of triumph, and this made the redcoats angry.

All they could do was grit their teeth and growl angrily, however. They knew that for this night, at least, their purpose of reaching the mainland was defeated.

Again the officers held a council of war, but when they broke up they had not come to any decision regarding their plans of procedure.

They made no further attempt to reach the mainland that night, but decided to wait till morning, and see if something would turn up to give them an advantage.

Nothing did, however, and they were forced to remain on the peninsula all next day, without making any attempt to get to the shore.

"We'll wait," said General Howe. "I think they'll run out of firewood, pretty soon, and then we will be enabled to get to the shore in the darkness."

The officers thought it likely that the dry wood before long, and then, not having any wood after some time, darkness would reign, when it would be no more for to get to the mainland.

And that night fires blazed on the shore, however, and so no attempt was made to get across the marsh.

The redcoats remained quietly on the peninsula all next day, and the next night the fires blazed as briskly as ever.

"They must have more wood than we thought," said General Howe, in disgust.

"Yes, they must work all day long gathering the wood," said another officer.

And this was indeed the case.

Wood was getting scarcer and scarcer, but there were hundreds of men ready and willing to work, and it was no great task to gather wood enough for use in bonfires each night.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth days were busy ones, however, for the wood had to be dragged or carried two to three miles. But the men never faltered. They would rather be doing this than doing nothing.

On the sixth night, however, a messenger reached the patriot force.

The messenger was from General Washington, and he brought word that the patriot main army had reached White Plains in safety, and for the force to come at once.

This was good news, indeed, and leaving the burning merrily, the patriots marched quietly across the interior, while the redcoats on the peninsula in ignorance of the fact that the enemy had flown, they could reach the mainland if they were to attempt.

"Won't they be surprised when they wake morning and find us gone?" said Bob Estabrook.

"They will, indeed," agreed Dick Slater.

"I'd like to see them, and hear what they say."

"So would I," from Mark Morrison.

"I'll wager that they will indulge in a few head-swear-words," said Sam Sanderson.

"So they will," grinned Bob Estabrook.

Next morning, when it was light enough so to see, the British looked across to the mainland for the first time, but they looked in vain.

The enemy was not to be seen.

"Where are the rebels?" asked one officer.

"That is just what I was wondering," said General Howe.

"Everything is very quiet over there."

"Looks as if there was no one there at all, is there?"

"Do you suppose the enemy has slipped away?" asked General Howe.

"Looks that way," was the reply.

Perhaps they are trying to play a trick on us, thought a suspicious officer. "They are tricky rascals, but they are trying to entice us into a trap."

"That is not an impossibility," agreed General Howe.

"It is not even on improbability," said another officer. "I am inclined to think that is what they are trying to do."

"We will soon find out," said the general. "I will send a scout to make investigations."

He sent for one of his most trustworthy scouts and told him what was required of him.

"Find out if the enemy has gone, or in hiding, and if so, lead us into a trap," the general directed.

"Very well, sir," was the reply.

"Do this as quickly as possible."

"I will, sir."

And then the scout stole away on his errand.

He was gone an hour, for he lost lots of time in moving very slowly and cautiously, as he did not know where the enemy might run upon some of the enemy at any moment. At the end of that time, however, he returned, looking very excited.

"Well?" exclaimed General Howe.

"They are not there, your excellency," the scout replied.

"They have gone away then?" eagerly.

"Yes, sir. They have gone, bag and baggage."

"I suspected it," the general cried. "They will stay here till the main army succeeded in making a treaty, and then have withdrawn and made a retreat. They have outwitted us—beaten us!"



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE VISIT HOME.

were very angry and very much disappointed. It was held by the officers, at once, to decide what was to be done.

It was decided that the first thing to do was to learn where the "rebels" had gone. To this end scouts were sent out.

The scouts were sent out with the information that the army had taken up its quarters on the hills near the town.

After a few days of reconnoitering, the enemy having been discovered, it was decided what should be done.

A council of war was held, and at last it was decided to follow the patriot army, if it was possible to do so.

On the next day, the British set out, and marched through the plain, and took up their position not far from where the enemy was encamped.

The British were not in a hurry to make an attack, unless they did not like the task, for the enemy was in a strong position.

After arriving at White Plains Dick Slater took leave of absence, and went to their homes.

It was five miles to where they lived, their homes being less than a quarter of a mile, and it did not take them very long to get there.

One of the matters was that the youths were eager to see their sweethearts, Alice Estabrook, Bob's sister, being the first, and Edith Slater, Dick's sister, being the last.

That the coming of the youths created excitement is stating it mildly. All were delighted to see them, and of course Alice and Edith were almost overwhelmed with joy.

Dick had visited awhile with his mother and sister, and Alice Estabrook wandered away in the forest, and Bob and Edith profited by the example, and followed suit soon afterward.

As a beautiful, sweet, and lively girl, and she was with all her heart, and now that he was with her as happy as it is possible for any girl to be, he was happy, for he loved Alice dearly.

He sat down under a tree and talked long and earnestly, not necessary to tell what was said; it is enough to say that Dick's arm was around the girl's waist, her head on his shoulder, and it was necessary, frequently, for the girl to get his lips close to the girl's face in order to make what he said—at any rate it is to be supposed that he said so.

He remained there more than two hours, although it

did not seem so long a time to them, and then they rose to return to the house.

They had taken only a few steps, when suddenly a half dozen rough-looking youths appeared, and facing the couple, ordered them to halt.

Dick Slater recognized the leader of the gang at once. His name was Joe Scroggs, and he was an oldtime enemy of Dick. Indeed, he had tried to go with Alice Estabrook many times, and had always been rebuffed.

Dick and Joe had been schoolmates, and on one occasion Dick had given Joe a most unmerciful thrashing. This had rankled in the youth's mind ever since, and he had sworn that he would get even with his conqueror if it took him a lifetime to do it.

It happened that he had been in the timber near the Slater home when Dick and Bob reached there that morning, and he hastened away, and gathered a little band of cronies, five in number, around him.

All of the five cronies were youths who disliked Dick. Indeed, nearly every one of them had been given a thrashing by the brave youth, and they were almost as eager as Joe himself to get a chance at Dick.

To this end they hung around, and had finally come upon Dick and Alice in the timber, as told.

Alice was alarmed, and turned pale.

"Oh, Dick, I fear they mean you harm," she whispered.

"Have no fear, Alice," he replied in a low voice. "I can thrash the whole gang if necessary."

"Oh, ye kin, kin ye?" said Joe, sneeringly and angrily, he having caught Dick's words.

"Yes, I can," was the calm reply, "and I'll get you out of the way and let us pass."

"Oh, ye will, hey?"

"I will. Stand aside, I say."

"Oh, ye want us ter stan' aside, do ye?" remarked Joe, in a sneering voice.

"I do; and you had better do so if you have any regard for your welfare."

As Dick spoke he disengaged Alice's hand from his arm, and pushed her gently to one side.

"That's right, git the gal out uv ther way," grinned Joe.

"There is need of doing so, for ruffians such as you and your comrades are have no respect or consideration for her sex," said Dick quietly. "And now, are you going to stand aside and let us pass?"

"Air we? Well, I guess we hain't, eh, fellers?" replied Joe.

"Not much we hain't," was the reply in chorus.

"No, sir-ree; we hain't agoin' ter step aside till arter we hev pounded ther life half outer ye, Dick Slater," declared Joe Scroggs viciously.

"So that's your game, is it?" cried Dick.

"Ye bet et is. At 'im, fellers!"

At the words the six young ruffians rushed at Dick, who braced himself for the fight, while a shrill scream went up from Alice's lips.

"Help! Help!" she cried.



"Oh, et won't do ye no good ter holler," growled Joe Scroggs. "We've got yer feller heer, erlone, an' we're goin' ter hammer 'im till ye won't know who he is by lookin' at 'im!"

"That remains to be seen," replied Dick, and they were at it hot and heavy.

Now, six to one is big odds, but Dick Slater was a wonderful youth. He was lithe as a panther, and as quick in his movements as one. He was, moreover, an expert with his fists, and knew how to strike a blow that would render an opponent unconscious.

He now went in to make every blow tell, and whenever he got a good lick at one of his opponents the fellow was sure to go down, and hard, too.

He managed to knock two of the ruffians down, and was then forced backward by the other four. The odds was too heavy for even the brave "Liberty Boy," but help suddenly came from an unexpected source. Alice in looking around, wildly, in search of help, noticed a goodly sized stick lying near, and leaping forward, she seized it, and running to where the youths were engaged in fighting, she struck Joe Scroggs on the side of his head and knocked him down.

"That's the way to do it, Alice," cried Dick, in delight. "Go to them. We can thrash the whole crowd."

With the club in the hands of the excited girl described a micircle in the air, and crack! it caught another of the youths on the jaw, flooring him like a flash.

At the same instant Dick knocked another one down, and the remaining youth took to his heels and fled like the coward that he was.

At that moment Bob Estabrook came dashing out from among the trees, crying, "What is it? What's the trouble?"

A little ways behind him was Edith Slater, and she was wildly excited, and panting, for the two had run at the top of their speed more than a quarter of a mile.

By this time the young ruffians had struggled to their feet, and without a word, but both acting on the impulse of the moment, Dick and Bob leaped forward and began kicking the youths lustily.

The "Liberty Boys" wore stout shoes, and the kicks were good, hard ones, and at every kick a yell went up from the lips of the recipient.

It was soon over, however. The youths who were being kicked did not tarry any longer than they were forced to; but raced away from the vicinity of the flying feet of their conqueror and his friend as rapidly as possible.

Each of the young ruffians received a couple of parting kicks, however, and Joe Scroggs was the recipient of three; and as Bob said, he deserved all he got, and more.

"How did it all come about?" asked Bob, when the young ruffians had disappeared.

"The scoundrels jumped out in front of us, and ordered us to stop, Bob," said Dick. "That was all there was to it."

"The fact that the patriots are in safety, and for the first time," said Bob. "I wish I had got

here in time, Dick, and then we would have how to fight."

"I didn't need your assistance, Bob, as it turned out," said Dick, smiling. "Alice, there, grabbed up the stick, and knocked them flat as pancakes. grand. Alice you are a regular little soldier."

"Oh, she can fight, if she wants to," grinned Dick, "used to pull my hair, when we were little. Dick, if ever she gets her mad up, and gets into a fight, She'll make you yell, or I miss my guess."

"Oh, you big storyteller, you," said Alice, smiling at her brother. "You don't believe that, do you, Dick?"

"No; and if I did, I'd be willing to risk it. You made me up so splendidly just now that I would be willing to let you pull my hair if you wished to do so. I own it."

"I won't pull your hair, Dick," with a smile. "You story-telling brother of mine had better look out for himself, or pull out some of his wool."

"Edith won't let you," grinned Bob. "She won't let any bald-headed people, and if you go to yanking her hair, you will have to look out for your own, eh, Edith?"

"Yes, indeed," with a smile.

The happy young couples returned to their homes, and spent the rest of the day in or near the houses.

It was a happy time for all, and the two families gathered together at the Estabrook home and had a big dinner.

Jollity reigned supreme, and Bob, as usual, was the life of the gathering. He could say more funny things in five minutes than most people could have thought of in a day.

When evening came the "Liberty Boys" bade goodnight to all, kissed their sweethearts, and promising to meet again while the patriot army was at White Plains if they could do so, took their departure.

As was told in a former "Liberty Boys" story, they did make an attack on the patriot force at White Plains on the 28th of October, but they lost 229 men, while the patriots lost only 140, and this discouraged General Mifflin to such an extent that he did not attack again, but retired to the point of the patriot army to North Castle. At this notable point, he turned back and returned to the Hudson River.

## THE END.

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